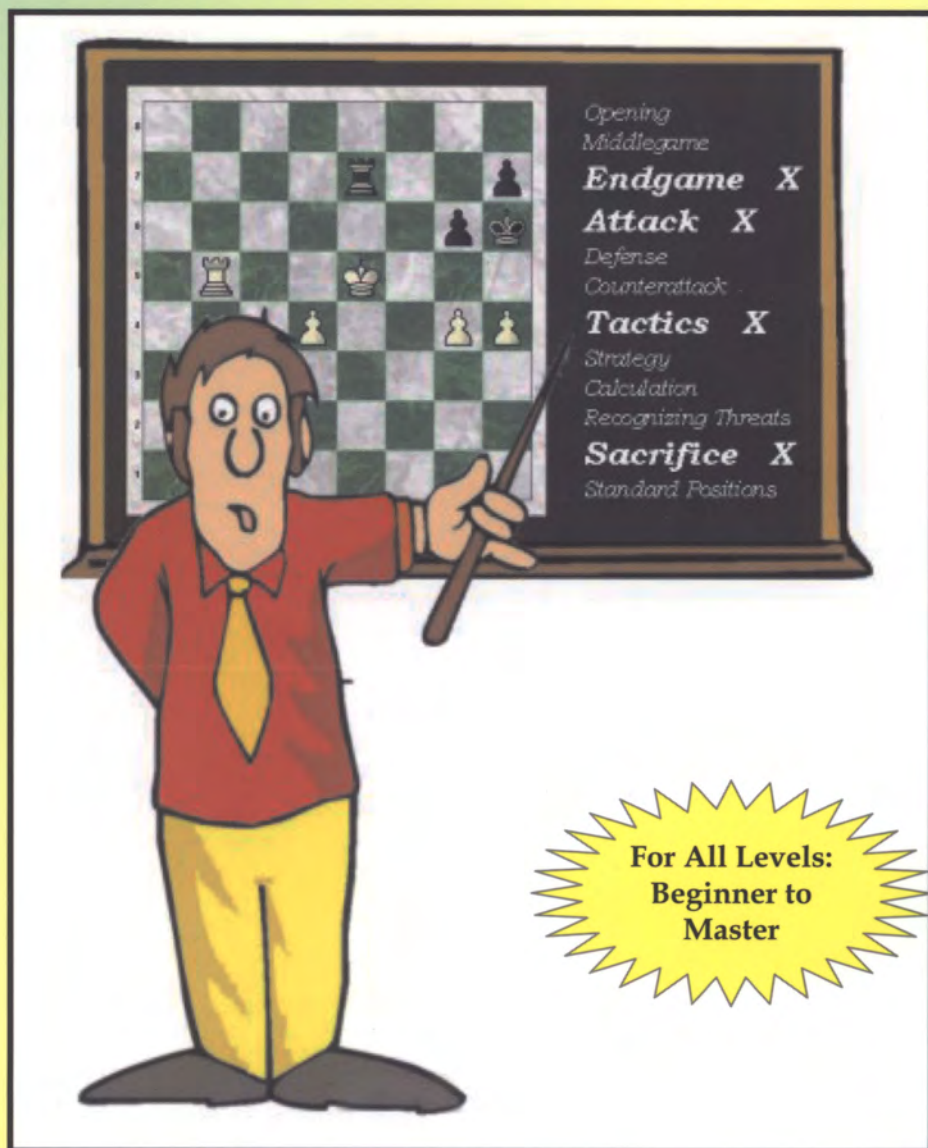


Chess Exam

and Training Guide

Rate yourself and learn how to improve!



For All Levels:
Beginner to
Master

Igor Khmelnitsky, International Chess Master

What others are saying:

“Western players, even those who become quite strong, often have holes in their game because they didn't develop systematically. Exactly how to fix these problems and build a strong foundation isn't so easy. Until now there was no **diagnostic tool**, but IM **Igor Khmelnitsky**, who learned the fundamentals in his native Ukraine, has filled this gap with his new book ***Chess Exam and Training Guide***. I believe this book will prove helpful for students and teachers who want to get an objective idea of their strengths and weaknesses and how to correct them.” - **John Donaldson**, International Master, director of Mechanics' Institute Chess Club

“I have often met **Igor Khmelnitsky** over the chess board throughout the last decade. He always impressed me with his understanding of the fine intricacies of the game. Now the **secret is revealed**. Read this book and learn how the different aspects of the game - strategy and tactics and knowledge of the endgame - come together to make a good all-around player. With patience and dedication you can travel down the same road.” - **Alex Yermolinsky**, Grandmaster, former US champion and a member of the US Olympic team.

“**Igor Khmelnitsky** has a unique ability to take complex chess positions and make them easy to understand” – **Joseph Casey Jr.**, Class C.

“This test is the next best thing to having your **personal chess coach!**” – **Dr. Ivan Misner**, founder and CEO of BNI International, best-selling author, co-author of *Masters of Success*

“*Chess Exam and Training Guide* is a puzzle book with a twist. All significant aspects of the game are tested in a clear and systematic way. The training ideas and book recommendations are right on the money!” - Alex Shabalov, Grandmaster, 3-times US Champion

“.... In addition to showing my weaker areas, also very helpful was a list of specific books and software products to use to help me improve. I highly recommend taking the test...” - Paul Clift, Class A

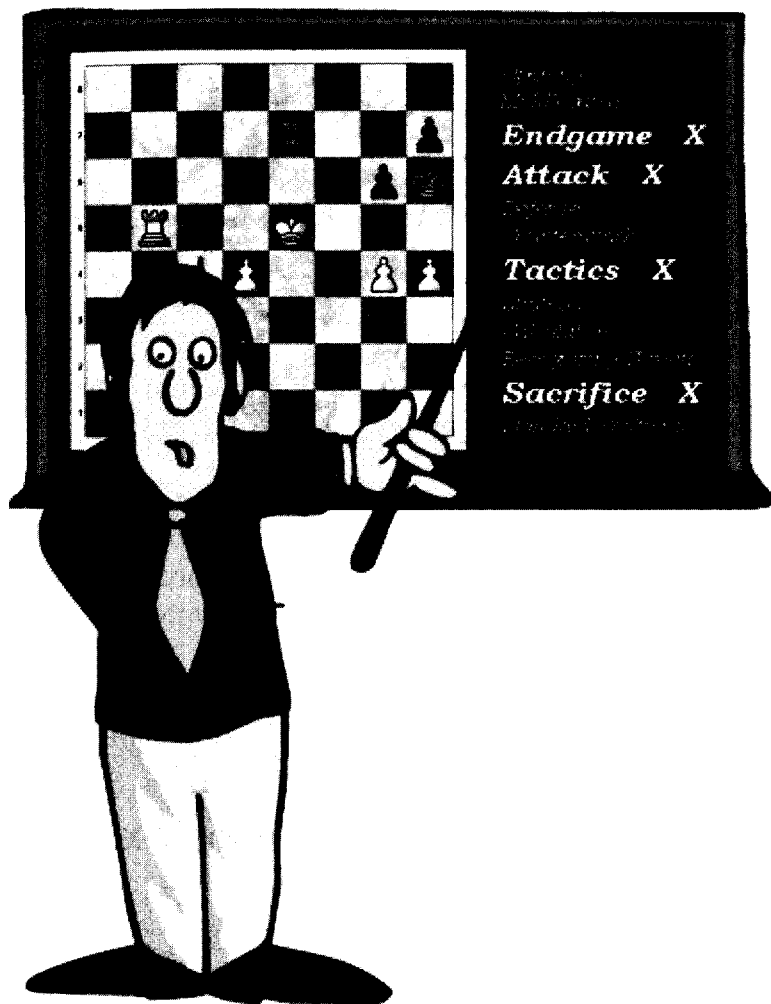
“...Thanks to the reports I got upon completing the test, it is easy to see where to place my precious chess study time. Now that I know the road to improvement, I'll try to convince my chess students to take this test...” - Bob Lynch, Class B, elementary school chess coach

“Take this book seriously and you will get **honest answers to your most crucial chess questions – where you are at now and in what directions you should be going!” - Igor Foygel, International Master, 30+ years of chess coaching in Ukraine and Massachusetts.**

Chess Exam

and Training Guide

Rate yourself and learn how to improve!



Igor Khmelnitsky, International Chess Master

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For ordering information see page 320

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Dedication:

This book is dedicated to my parents. To my deceased father **Naum**, who taught me this great game and was my biggest fan. To my mother **Polina**, who is always willing to give without asking for anything in return.

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About the Author



Igor Khmelnitsky earned the title of International Chess Master in 1990 after a convincing victory in the 1st Leonid Stein Memorial in L'viv, Ukraine.

Igor is a winner of many national and international tournaments in Ukraine, Russia, Germany, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and the United States. At various points during his career, he has won individual encounters with many of the game's best players - including Lev Alburt, Boris Alterman, Viorel Bologan, Roman Dzindzikhashvili, Vasily Ivanchuk, Alexander Ivanov, Oleg Romanishin, Alexander Shabalov, Evgeniy Sveshnikov, Patrick Wolff, and Alex Yermolinsky. In total, Igor has beaten over 30 different Grandmasters. He has been a participant in the Ukrainian National Championship as well as a three times contestant in the US National Championship.

Igor Khmelnitsky is also a very experienced coach. His first high profile coaching experience was in 1986, when he served as a coaching assistant of the Ukrainian national junior team. Several members of that team went on to become successful Grandmasters (V.Ivanchuk, B.Alterman, M.Brodsky, A.Maksimenko and others...). Later Igor assisted various leading Ukrainian players, including Y.Kruppa (now Grandmaster) and Women Grandmaster L.Semenova, a challenger to the World Championship Title.

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Since moving to the United States in 1991, Igor Khmelnitsky has been coaching in the Philadelphia area. His students include players of all levels, ranging from novices to masters.

Igor Khmelnitsky has published his comments, annotated games, and articles in various chess publications. Among them, the most prestigious periodicals – Chess Informant, New in Chess, ChessBase, 64, Chess Life, and Chess Today. He is also the founder and publisher of the two popular chess websites www.IamCoach.com and www.ChessExam.com.

Igor Khmelnitsky is a contributing author to the best-seller *Masters of Success* by Ivan Mizner, PhD (© 2004, Entrepreneur Press)

Igor Khmelnitsky holds a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from Temple University (Philadelphia). He is a Sr. Actuarial Consultant at Aetna Inc., the leader in the health insurance industry. Igor works at Aetna's Blue Bell office in Pennsylvania.

Igor shares his success with his wife Svetlana and son Alec.

Preface: A note to the Reader

I have been coaching chess in the United States since 1991. Over the years I have worked with 100's of players of various levels. I have held numerous private sessions at my office, at students' locations and at tournament sites, as well as consultations via telephone and e-mail.

As a coach, two of the most frequent questions I have to answer are:

- ❖ What is my current level and when can I become a master?
- ❖ How do I improve the level of my games and my rating?

Every time, I give similar brief responses –

- ❖ Anyone who is determined can improve at chess.
- ❖ Anyone, even a beginner, can become a master if he or she has a good training plan and follows it diligently.
- ❖ In order to develop a plan, a detailed initial evaluation is necessary.

In this book I will answer these questions for you in greater detail. I will evaluate your current level and offer time-tested training suggestions.

Private lessons are very expensive in the United States and many people can only afford infrequent sessions with a professional coach. Those who can afford lessons financially usually do not have much time to study. Whether it is lack of money or time, a majority can only afford a limited number of training sessions. As a coach, I feel that it is my obligation to help them to the best of my ability.

Consider a typical initial training session that runs approximately two hours and costs somewhere between \$100 and \$200. I run a test of about 6-10 training positions, go over 2-4 games and leave about 30 minutes to offer recommendations and answer questions. These “short” 1.5 hours are barely enough time to collect and process the minimum data needed to design a good training plan. If only I had more time with the student, I would be able to offer so much better advice. Also, considering that for some this would be the only session until 3 or even 6 months down the road, you can see that designing the optimal training plan becomes even more important. The bottom line is that more quality data is needed to come up with successful recommendations.

In order to streamline the process, I developed questionnaires, sample training plans, books, and software lists. Still, I felt like I could do better.

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One day, while waiting at the doctor's office for my annual checkup, it hit me – *the **Test** is exactly what the doctor ordered!* If I had a broad **Exam** that my students could take on their own, then even a short session might be enough to **review** the results and focus on the categories highlighted in the report where the student needed most help. This is very much like an x-ray and lab work that a doctor might use to evaluate a patient's needs and to identify problem areas.

I researched books currently in print but did not find anything quite like what I envisioned, so I rolled up my sleeves and got to work. I decided to design my book as a self-study, so the do-it-yourselfers could find both a clear interpretation of their test results as well as the corresponding training recommendations.

In the process of designing the test, I have outlined three major challenges and the approach I would take to deal with them successfully:

1. **What are the areas I would like to test and how can I do it in the most effective and efficient way?**

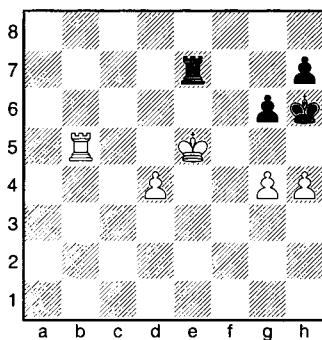
I offer *Overall Evaluation* and reports in the following categories:

Stages of the game – *Opening, Middlegame, Endgame.*

Dynamics – *Attack, Defense, Counterattack, Strategic, Tactical.*

Situational – *Calculation skills, Recognizing the Threat, Ability to Sacrifice, Knowledge of Standard Endgames.*

The test consists of 100 positions with 2 questions pertaining to each one. Every position is classified into the multiple report types. For example, here is the position from my game in junior tournament in Kiev (1980).



Khmelnitsky, I – Spivak, A

Question #0

1. Evaluate the position

- A. White is Winning
- B. White is Significantly Better
- C. White is Slightly Better
- D. Nearly Equal

2. Where White ♖ should go?

- A. 1. ♖d6
- B. 1. ♖f6
- C. 1. ♖f4
- D. No significant difference

If **Question #0** were included in the test, it would contribute points to your evaluation reports on *Endgame*, *Attack*, *Tactics*, and *Sacrifice*.

Once you complete the entire test, points you earned for each question will be subtotaled by 12 report categories and grand-totaled overall. I have found 100 to be the optimal number of questions that could provide a real thorough evaluation without being overwhelming.

2. How to make questions and statistics offered in this book interesting for everybody – Beginner to Master?

The test is comprised of positions of varying difficulty. Some will be easy, while others may be quite challenging. There are few positions that will make even grandmasters sweat.

Putting it all together in the uniform *points-to-rating* conversion tables was far from easy. I am familiar with various statistical analysis methods, and also used to translating them into simple tables and graphs. In my original version of the test created in MS Excel back in 1999 that you can still find on my website www.IamCoach.com, I have built statistically significant tables based on the data collected from most of my students, some of my friends (among them International Masters and Grandmasters), and many website visitors. In this book I am providing these conversion tables so you can find your relative strengths and weaknesses, get rating estimates, and see how the selections that you made match up against other test takers (by rating categories).

Let say your choice for **Question #0-1** was A and **#0-2** was A. So you can check and see how you did:

Question #0	Choice	Score	Distribution of Answers by Rating					
			Under 1000	1000-1400	1400-1800	1800-2200	2200-2400	2400+
1	A	5	60%	75%	75%	80%	100%	100%
	B	1	22%	20%	25%	20%		
	C		18%	5%				
	D	-1						
2	A		34%	30%	22%	15%	2%	
	B	5	20%	29%	45%	62%	82%	100%
	C		27%	31%	28%	20%	16%	
	D		19%	10%	5%	3%		

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You earned 5 points for the Part #1, which is similar to what the majority got. For the Part #2 on the other hand, you answered well below average. In fact, even 20% of unrated players did better than you.

3. How to eliminate or reduce the effect of guessing or random answering?

Finally, every dataset has its outliers and I had to come up with the best way to deal with it. Not only was there a need to overcome the 25% guessing chance, but also the scenario when the move and expected outcome are not “related”. How familiar is this situation – you are working on a puzzle and think that you have found the correct move. Next you rush to check your answer and see that, while your move is correct, you missed some good defensive replies and need to spend more time to figure out the way to deal with them. Many times, the ability to find the move does not necessarily mean that you can properly evaluate the outcome. The reverse is true as well; you might be able to skillfully evaluate a position, yet cannot find the right way to proceed.

I believe that I have figured out the best way to address both these issues. The “*Random Guess*” is dealt with by assigning full credit – 5 points per correct answer, 1-2 points partial credit for some good, but not the best answers, 0 – for average answer and negative (-1)-(-2) for bad answers. Also, in several cases, I assign less than the full 5 points when your answer is incomplete.

The problem of linking the move selection and the anticipated outcome is dealt with by offering two questions for each diagram, one of which is typically about the assessment while the other is about the move. So in order to get the maximum 10 points per diagram, you need to be able to find the correct move and understand the result it would bring.

In the Example above (**Question #0**) I would expect that only those who saw the entire winning combination would earn the full 10 points. For White to win he must play 1.♔f6. The game continued 1...♚e4 (same thing after any other ♚ retreat) 2.♚h5+!! ♜xh5 3.♙g5#. Since the Parts #1 and #2 are closely connected, you are not likely to get 5 points for one and not the other. Those who did not see the *checkmate*, would most likely select on Part 1 and something other than on Part 2.

After addressing the above-mentioned concerns I began offering the evaluation test in various electronic forms on my website www.IamCoach.com some 4+ years ago. I can say with certainty that the test works – not only does it accurately evaluate your rating, but it also easily pinpoints the trouble spots. For example, while evaluating the answers of a 1750-rated player (those who took the test can request a review of their results with subsequent designing of their personal training plan), I saw an *Overall* rating of 1824, *Tactical* of 1720, *Strategic* of 2040, *Calculation* of 1550, *Sacrifice* of 1450, and *Standard Endgame* of 1970. The conclusion one could make is that this is a solid player who has some basic *Tactical* skills, and needs to focus on more challenging *Tactical* exercises involving complex calculations. Volume II from the series *Manual of Chess Combinations* published by *Russian Chess House* was assigned as one of the required training materials. Solving *Studies* was suggested as another way to improve in that area.

The rating you will earn after taking the test is a measure of your “knowledge” level. Depending on how you handle the pressure of the tournament game, your “practical” level can be up to 100 points higher or lower. The true value of your rating varies depending on the level of your opposition. The “club” Class A player will have a very hard time competing against a similarly rated player who regularly competes in World Open and other big money events.

Overall, I expect for your “earned” rating to be accurate, but would still suggest you take it with some grain of salt. You should focus on relativity of ratings across the reports in order to identify the areas where you need to start working on improvement at once.

I have implemented two uncommon conceptual ideas that I thought would be helpful to my readers. First, I decided to place scores and commentaries on the page following the question, so your thoughts and reasoning would still be fresh in your mind and could be compared to my commentaries.

Also, I know that many people, including myself, will be very anxious to see their actual scores and ratings. This often makes us rush through the test. To help you, I have calculated *Points to Rating* conversion tables after every 10-question subset. This enables you to get some preliminary assessments after every 10 diagrams. So, take your time in answering each question!

Finally, when you complete the test and get your results, you are only a little more than half way through the book. In the section ***Training Tips and Recommendations***, I offer a number of examples from my games as well as my training recommendations for each of the 12 sub-categories tested. While I am not attempting to write a comprehensive manual, the do-it-yourselfers should find plenty of tips and shortcuts for their studies.

My book and software recommendations are rating-specific and should provide a good starting point for your training plan. The list of recommended products is not sponsored by any publisher, and is based solely on my personal preferences as well as my students' feedback. You should expect this list to change as I get to review more and more new products. For example, while I was editing the final version of this book, I came across Mark Dvoretsky's *Endgame Manual*, which I liked. This is one of those rare books by the world-renowned coach that is not difficult to read and is very nicely produced by *Russell Enterprises (ChessCafé)*.

Not only the recommended product list is constantly evolving, but I also have full intentions to keep revising and updating the distributions and rating charts. Thus, I strongly encourage you to stay informed by registering yourself on my website

As more and more people take the test and submit their results, the significance of statistics used will continue to increase. You could help out by e-mailing me your answers as well as general comments. Visit my website www.ChessExam.com to contact me.

Igor Khmelnitsky
Philadelphia, 2004

Warning: Disclaimer

This book is designed to provide information on understanding chess principles and evaluating chess skills as well as various training methods.

Please remember that you are taking a test, not reading yet another puzzle book. You will face positions of varying degree of difficulty. Some of them will probably be familiar to you, while others might offer a serious challenge. The more experienced you are, the greater is the number of ideas or complete positions you will recognize. And this is OK, since I am testing your base knowledge as well as the skills you use to apply it. A combination of well-known and new positions gives me the best chance to identify the areas you need to be focusing on in your training.

While answering, be on the alert and do not make any presumptions. The order of the questions (i.e. level of difficulty and type) was **purposely** randomized. Thus you will see an easy position (i.e. 1 move *Tactics*), being followed by a very difficult one (i.e. 8 moves *Calculation*); the *Opening* question being trailed by the ♣ *Endgame*. This makes “home” testing a bit more realistic by merely resembling a common game situation, where you never know what to expect.

Statistical analysis is only as good as the data used. I am relying on the data collected over the years by offering the same set of positions to players of all levels – from beginners to Grandmasters. The data showing the level of test-taker’s knowledge is expected to have discrepancies due to various intangible factors. Among them – the time spent on each question, the seriousness of effort and different rating scales, just to name a few. Additionally, some people perform better or worse than their official rating would show in a real game environment vs. doing the test at home. Finally, a 1790 rating (for example) can mean a very different strength level when comparing a club player in a rural area with a “professional” World Open participant trying to win \$10,000 in the Under-1800 section.

Every effort has been made to make this book as complete and as accurate as possible. However, you may find mistakes, both typographical and in substance. I have tried my best to thoroughly check the diagrams, game analysis, and names of participants and authors.

Should you find any errors in this book, I would greatly appreciate your notice.

The prototype of the Exam was released as a software tool in MS Excel format back in 1999. While keeping virtually all of the 100 questions the same, I have revised everything else in the test including annotations, scores, statistical tables and reports. A lot of the materials, especially in the *Training Tips and Recommendation* section, have been added.









None of the books or software recommendations was sponsored by a particular publisher.

This text should be used only as a general guide and not as an ultimate source of chess training information.

The statistical tables and training material references are current as of the printing date and may be revised somewhat in the future. To keep up with new developments, please register at www.ChessExam.com

CHESSE Symbols:

+	Check
++	Double Check
#	Checkmate
!!	Brilliant Move
!	Good Move
!?	Interesting Move
?!	Dubious Move
?	Bad Move
??	Blunder

	King
	Queen
	Rook
	Bishop
	Knight
	Pawn
0-0	 -side Castle
0-0-0	 -side Castle

Acknowledgments

Materials used in this book were accumulated during the 20+ years of my chess career as a player and a coach. While all exercises are from various sources, I did all of the annotations myself.

I would like to mention the following publications as my favorite sources:

Chess Today – daily e-mail newspaper (www.ChessToday.net);

Shahmatniy Utchebnik by Pozharsky, V;

Tehnika v Shahmatnoi Igre by Dvoretsky, M;

Encyclopedia of Chess Middlegames (www.Shahovski.com)

Shkola Seredini Igri & Shkola Endshpilya by Averbakh, Y;

ChessBase MegaBase 2003 (www.ChessBase.com);

Various *New In Chess* magazines (www.NewInChess.com).

Images used with permission from *JupiterImages*, a division of *Jupitermedia* Corporation (www.ClipArt.com)

Diagrams were created using ChessBase 8.0 (www.ChessBase.com).

Inspiration for publishing and answers to all “how to...” questions - Dan Poynter (www.parapublishing.com).

A number of individuals assisted me in shaping the final version of the original test. My long time student, **Bob Fischer** (National Master), had several interesting positions worthy of inclusion alongside the examples of world-renowned players. Many of my students took the Exam and contributed their scores and comments. International Master **Edward Porper** was the first titled player who completed the entire test and offered numerous good suggestions. Several titled players (from Masters to Grandmasters) offered their selections and notes on individual questions included in the Exam. Many of my website visitors submitted their answers and ratings. All of which helped to improve the quality of the Exam as well as production of statistically significant analysis.

Just when I thought that the book was ready, I reached the always challenging “editing” stage. I would like to offer special gratitude to the people who helped me during this final stretch. My long time student **Joe Casey** (Class B) helped researching sources of some of my examples.

Another student **Paul Clift** (Class A) proofread the text. My good friends Grandmasters **Alex Yermolinsky**, **Jaan Ehvest** and **Alex Shabalov**, International Masters **John Donaldson** and **Igor Foygel** (my coach in 1998-1999), and **Glenn Petersen** (Class A, former editor of *Chess Life*) read the manuscript and offered many great suggestions.

Also, **Yermolinsky** and **Foygel** did a terrific job thoroughly reviewing my annotations and a point system.

It is also very nice to have experts in the family; my sister **Valerie** and cousin **Alex Helms** helped a lot with proofreading and broad remarks. My brother-in-law **Vlad Kozlovsky** provided superb technical support.

I sincerely thank all of these fine people.

Special thanks to my beautiful wife **Svetlana** for being supportive with all of the projects I manage to take ... often at the same time!

Final Comments: How to Take the Exam

Do not be overly concerned if you couldn't do a particular problem. You must, however, give your full efforts on every question.

Please read the questions carefully since, in some cases, there might be more than one good answer. The difference in points awarded for the best and a good answer is quite significant.

I recommend spending no more than 20 minutes on each diagram. Use the chessboard or work directly from the diagram in the book. If using the board, do not move the pieces. Avoid guessing since, in the long run, incorrect reasoning is preferred to making your choice without one at all. In some cases, if you missed some of the critical issues, you are awarded fewer points than the maximum of 5, even if you selected the best choice.

A majority of the questions have the first part asking for your evaluation, yet in many cases, you should consider focusing on selecting the best move first (from Part 2). This perfectly resembles a real chess game situation. When the position is *static*, you need to evaluate the situation, come up with the plan and only then proceed with a move selection. Oftentimes, the order is reversed when the position is *dynamic*. You need to start by selecting moves that defend (or attack), next pick one of them and calculate the variation, and only then assess the result to see if you should play this move or look for another one.

In many positions where there is no clear victory for either side, the evaluation can be very subjective. To make the best selection, I suggest that you ask yourself the following -“Whose side would I rather be on?” If you don't really care, choose “*Nearly Equal*.” If you have a small preference, select “... *is Slightly Better*”. If you definitely favor one side, pick “... *is Better*” or “... *is Significantly Better*”

Once you have made up your mind on a given question, turn the page and carefully review the answers. Take your time in going through the answers before moving to the next problem. A good number of positions that are not a “clear-cut” win should be bookmarked for future analysis and practicing.

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Record your points for part 1 and part 2 and total them in order to get your total for the question.

Create a score sheet and record your points earned for every question. You can get a complimentary one from my site www.ChessExam.com. Having all of your points in one place will come in very handy when you finish the test and have to fill in the tables in order to get your ratings.

I would strongly encourage you to take the test in several sittings. You can get preliminary assessments after every 10 diagrams.

Also, I have few tricky questions where I test your general logical skills and, no laughs, a sense of humor.

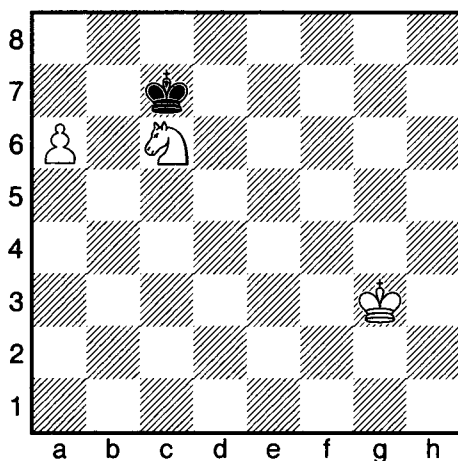
When you finish the test, you will see instructions on how to use the tables and reports.

Finally, if you are anxious to find out my training suggestions, you can always go directly to the *Training Tips and Recommendations* section and complete the entire Exam later.

This is it!

Now, let the EXAM begin!

Question #1



White to Move!

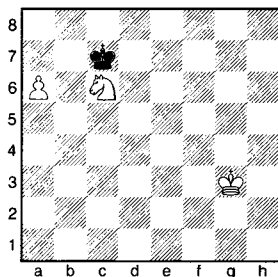
1 - I Which statement is the most accurate?

A	White is Winning NO matter whose move it is
B	Draw NO matter whose move it is
C	White can Win without using his ♔
D	Draw only if Black to move

1 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖c6-b4
B	1. ♖a6-a7
C	1. ♔g3-f3
D	Both A and B yield the same result

(1) Training Position: ♔ + ♘ + ♙ vs. ♚

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		5%	12%	7%			
B		8%	9%	7%			
C		19%	8%				
D	5	68%	71%	86%	100%	100%	100%

2 A	5	31%	69%	86%	91%	100%	100%
B		22%	7%	6%			
C	-1	7%					
D	1	40%	24%	8%	9%		

1-1 To secure a Draw, Black needs to eliminate the last ♙. If it was Black's move, his ♚ could take the ♘ and still have just enough time to catch the ♙. Therefore <A> is incorrect. It is White to move and he can win (is incorrect). The winning plan is – to protect the ♙ with the ♘, bring White ♔ over to protect the ♙ (<C> is incorrect) and jointly with the ♘ get it promoted. That leaves <D> as the only correct answer – 5 points.

1-2 A serious mistake is 1. ♔f3? leaving the ♘ unprotected. Thus you are penalized for selecting <C>.

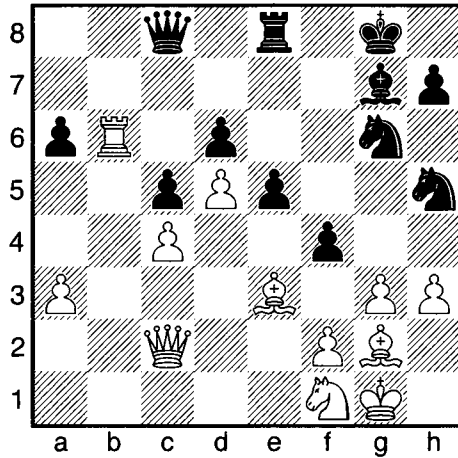
The safest way for the ♘ to defend the ♙ from the ♔'s attack is from behind since Black ♚ must remain next to the ♙ and can't continue harassing the ♘. Both - 1. ♘b4 (<A>) and 1. ♙a7 () do just that.

The next step is to bring the White ♔ to defend the ♙ and use the ♘ to chase Black ♚ out of the corner.

However, after 1. ♙a7? ♔b7 Black can maneuver between the b7 and a8 and White ♔ can't protect the ♙ and free the ♘ due to a *stalemate*.

After 1. ♘b4, (5 points for <A>) White ♔ will travel to b5 and free the ♘. Then combining the efforts of the ♔ + ♘ + ♙ White will easily drive Black ♚ away from the corner. 1 point for choice <D>.

Question #2



White to Move!

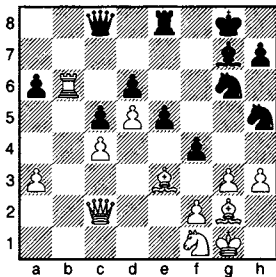
2 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

2 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖e3-d2
B	1. ♜b6xd6
C	1. ♙g3xf4
D	1. ♖e3-c1

(2) Baburin,A – Basas,J Andorra Open, 1998



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		26%	31%	7%	2%	9%	
B				7%	7%		
C	5	64%	65%	82%	83%	91%	97%
D	1	10%	4%	4%	8%		3%

2 A	1	79%	50%	36%	8%	19%	
B	5	21%	24%	29%	67%	77%	100%
C	-1			6%			
D			26%	29%	25%	4%	

2-1 White is dominating on the ♔-side, but he must deal with Black's initiative on the ♚-side. The overall assessment is that White is better and you get 5 points for <C>. It is way optimistic to think that White is winning, but you get 1 point for answer <D>.

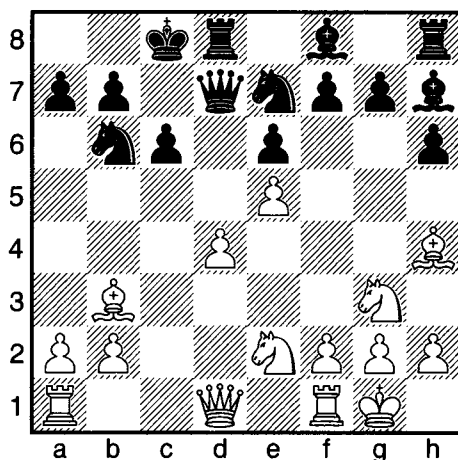
2-2 Both 1.♔d2 (1 point for <A>) and 1.♙c1 (<D>) are OK, but somewhat passive and after the aggressive 1...♙e4!? or 1...♙xg3 2.♙xg3 ♙e4!? Black has some initiative on the ♚-side.

You are penalized for choosing a self-destructing 1.♙f4? (-1 point for <C>) as it is only helping Black by opening attacking lines for ♖e8 and ♙g7 against the weakened position of White ♙.

An exciting positional sacrifice - 1.♞d6!? (5 points for) was played in the game. White got two ♙s for the piece, neutralized Black's initiative and gained a psychological momentum. Black never recovered from the initial shock and quickly fell apart. After 1...♙xg3 2.♙xg3 ♙f8? (already a losing move, better was 2...♙f6, but after 3.♞c6 and 4.♞xc5 White has excellent chances) 3.♞xg6+! (and the rest is easy!) ♙xg6 4.♞xg6+ ♙g7 5.♙g4 ♙e7 6.♙h6+ Black resigned.

I suggest you play the starting position against a friend (training partner) or computer to practice your attacking skills.

Question #3



White to Move!

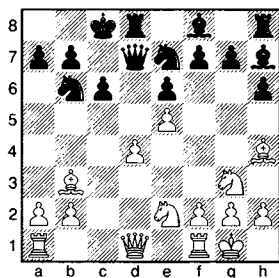
3 - I Does Black have immediate threats?

A	No. White can go on with his play.
B	Yes. White must defend.
C	Yes, but not serious. White can ignore.
D	Both A and B are correct

3 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖a1-c1
B	1. ♜f2-f4
C	1. ♙h4×e7
D	1. ♜a2-a4

(3) Fabian, J - Hort, V Prague, 1963



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		26%	5%				
B	5	69%	77%	93%	100%	100%	100%
C			18%	7%			
D	-2	5%					

2 A	-1	25%					
B		24%	52%	36%	17%	7%	
C	5	51%	48%	57%	83%	93%	100%
D	-1			7%			

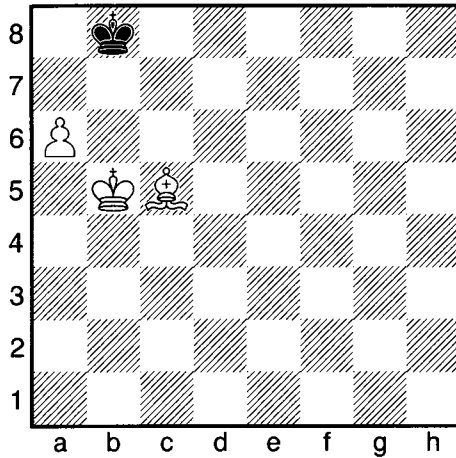
3-1 White ♖ on d4 is the obvious target, but it is well protected. On the other hand ♜h4 has no moves and, if attacked, would be in big trouble. By playing ♗g7-g5 Black can trap the “poor” ♜ at once. Thus, there is a real threat that White must deal with. earns you 5 points. If you missed that <A> and are mutually exclusive and selected <D>, you lose 2 points.

3-2 Once you have identified the problem, it is easy to narrow down your options. Choices <A> 1. ♖c1 and <D> 1. ♖a4 leave the ♜ in the trap and each deserves 1 point penalty.

Both 1. ♖f4 () and 1. ♜xe7 (<C>) help in preventing ♗g7-g5. However, upon closer examination, you should be able to find that after 1. ♖f4 Black could still play 1... ♗g5! After 2. ♖xg5 ♗g6 the ♜ is lost!

Choice <C> - 1. ♜xe7 is a wise pick solving the ♜ “problem” at once and earning you 5 points.

Question #4



White to Move!

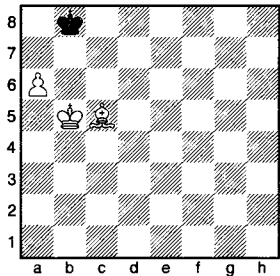
4 - I What result to you expect?

A	White Wins
B	Draw
C	Another White ♖ on a2 would change the outcome
D	Both B and C are correct

4 - I If allowed, White would want to...

A	switch places of his ♔ and his ♕
B	switch places of his ♔ and his ♖
C	switch places of his ♕ and his ♖
D	do either one of the above

(4) Training Position: ♔ + ♙ + ♚ vs. ♚



White to Move!

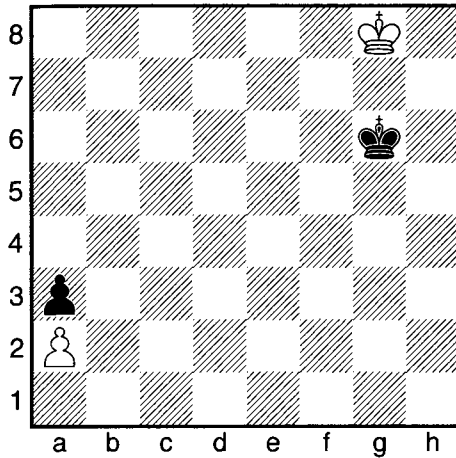
	Score	0 -	1000-	1400-	1800-	2200-	2400-
		1000	1400	1800	2200	2400	2800
1	A	-1	5%	7%			
	B	5	61%	88%	100%	100%	100%
	C		5%				
	D		29%	5%			
2	A		20%	15%			
	B		12%	12%	3%		
	C		17%	11%	6%		
	D	5	51%	62%	91%	100%	100%

4-1 This is a very important basic endgame position. To win, White needs to promote the ♙ and, thus, must force Black ♚ out of the corner. Since White ♙ can't attack the square of promotion (a8), White won't be able to succeed. Black ♚ will move between a8 and b7 and any attempt to force him away would result in a *stalemate*. If you thought that White could win, you lose 1 point. Adding one or several extra ♙s on the a-file won't make any difference. The correct choice is - 5 points.

Remember that the ♙ on the ♖ file (a or h) and a ♙ of the "wrong" color can't win against the lone ♚, if the latter could reach the square of promotion.

4-2 White would welcome with a great enthusiasm any of the proposed changes. Either <A> or or <C> would transform a theoretically drawn position (see Part 1) into an easily won one. Since either the ♙ would become of the "right" color (<A>), or the ♙ would be switched from the ♖ file to either b-file () or c-file (<C>). No matter what, White should win with minimal accuracy. You get 5 points for <D>.

Question #5



White to Move!

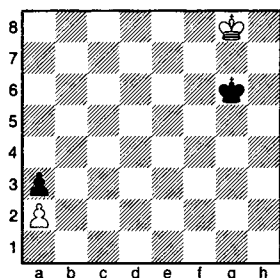
5 - I What result to you expect?

A	White wins
B	Black wins
C	Draw
D	Can go either way

5 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♔g8-h8
B	1. ♔g8-f8
C	Either move draws
D	Either move loses

(5) Shakman, 1924



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	-1	5%					
B		25%	26%	21%	8%		
C	5	67%	74%	79%	92%	100%	100%
D	-1	3%					

2 A	5	26%	35%	43%	92%	100%	100%
B		22%	25%	7%			
C	-1	17%	17%	21%			
D		35%	23%	29%	8%		

5-1 An important ♖ endgame example. White is in trouble, since Black has a more active ♜ that can go and win the ♖a2. Even a Draw seems out of reach, thus you lose 1 point if you thought White could win (<A>). However, a Draw is achievable despite losing the ♖ on a2. White ♜ must travel to c2 and block Black ♜ in the corner as soon as the latter takes the ♖ on a2. Choice <C> is worth 5 points.

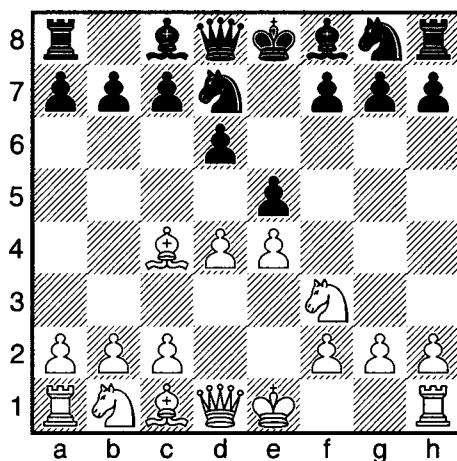
5-2 Knowing the defensive plan is very important; yet executing it is still a very difficult task. Black can take the ♖a2 on his 6th move, so White ♜ must arrive to c2 no later than his 7th move. Sounds doable, doesn't it?

Well, let's try it - 1.♜f8? () ♜f6! Black makes a step towards the ♖a2 and now will only need 5 moves to get there, yet White ♜ is stuck, after either 2.♜e8 or 2.♜g8 he is still 6 moves away from the c2. The result - White ♜ loses the race!

After the counterintuitive, but, nevertheless, correct 1.♜h8! (<A>) ♜f6 2.♜h7 both Black and White made a progress and now need 5 moves each to get to a2 and c2 respectively. After 2...♜e5 3.♜g6 ♜d4 4.♜f5 ♜c3 5.♜e4 ♜b2 4.♜d3 ♜x a2 5.♜c2 Black ♜ is stuck in the "box".

If you dismissed the correct 1.♜h8 without much thinking, assuming that the ♜ goes the wrong way, blame your Geometry teacher, who must have consistently claimed that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

Question #6



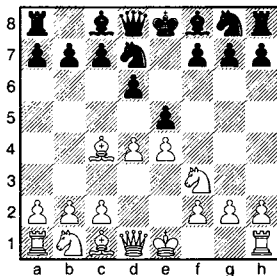
Black to Move!

6 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	Black is Slightly Better
B	White is Slightly Better
C	Black has more space
D	Position is Equal

6 - II What is the best move?

A	4...♘f8-e7
B	4...♘g8-f6
C	4...♙c7-c6
D	Both B and C are good choices

(6) Training Example: *Opening*Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	-1	5%	25%				
B	5	67%	75%	71%	75%	100%	100%
C	-1	12%					
D		16%		29%	25%		

2 A		48%	24%	36%	33%	28%	14%
B	-1	52%	51%	21%			
C	5		20%	22%	50%	72%	86%
D			5%	21%	17%		

6-1 The *Opening* line from the Philidor defense **1.♠e4 ♘e5 2.♘f3 ♗d6 3.♗d4 ♘bd7 4.♙c4**. This *Opening* is not very popular with Black, since his position is rather passive. White is a little better developed, has space advantage and pressures in the center!

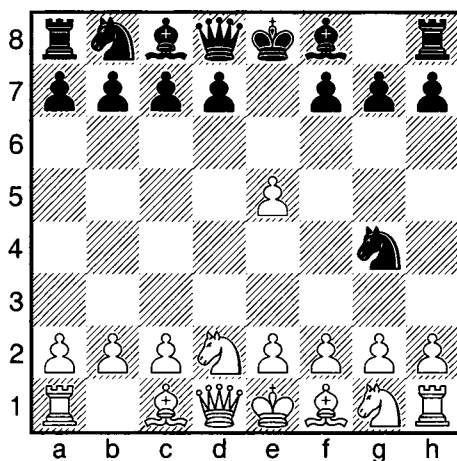
Considering all of the above, *White is slightly better* (5 points for), but Black's position is solid. Those who thought that Black is better or has more space, lose 1 point, since these assessments have no merit.

6-2 As mentioned in 6-1, Black's position is solid, but he does have one soft spot that has to be taken care of at once – the ♗ on f7.

Black is immediately in trouble after careless **4...♘f6?** (-1 point for) **5.♘g5** or **4...♙e7?** (<A>) **5.♗×e5 ♘×e5 (5...♗×e5 6.♙d5!)** **6.♘×e5 ♗×e5 7.♙h5** attacking the ♗s on f7 and e5.

After the accurate **4...♗c6** (5 points for <C>), White doesn't have any serious "shots" right away and should continue developing pieces and trying to build up his small advantage.

Question #7



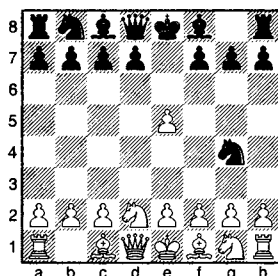
White to Move!

7 - I What is the best move?

A	4. ♖h2-h3
B	4. ♜g1-f3
C	4. ♖f2-f4
D	4. ♖e2-e4

7 - II How should Black respond to 4. ♖e2-e4?

A	4... ♜d8-h4
B	4... ♜f8-c5
C	4... ♜g4×e5
D	4... ♜g4×f2

(7) Training Position: *Opening*

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		25%	26%				
B	5	35%	52%	64%	68%	95%	100%
C	-1	17%	6%				
D		23%	16%	36%	32%	5%	

2 A		5%	13%	7%			
B	-2	48%		9%	15%		
C	5	25%	75%	74%	77%	100%	100%
D	-1	22%	12%	10%	8%		

7-1 Another *Opening* example – the position that occurs after 1.♠d4 ♘f6 2.♘d2?! ♙e5 3.♙xe5 ♘g4. After sacrificing the ♙, Black is trying to regain it back. It is unwise to try to focus on defending it at all cost; rather White should simply continue development.

The “one horse attack” that Black started must not be ignored, since several games ended in a similar tragic fashion. I hope you saw that after 4.♙f4?? (-1 point for <C>) Black could immediately win with 4...♘e3! trapping the ♖ on d1. The same outcome is after 4.♙h3? (<A>), since after 4...♘e3! White can’t take the ♘ anyway, due to the *checkmate* 5.♙xe3 ♖h4+ 6.♙g3 ♖xg3#.

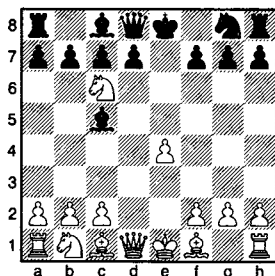
Choice <D> - 4.♙e4 makes Black’s task of regaining the ♙ a little easier than it should have been. Theory recommends 4.♘gf3 (5 points for), after 4...♖e7 Black may eventually regain the ♙, but White keeps a small advantage.

7-2 After 4.♙e4, Black has to deal with the threat of ♖xg4, since the ♘ is under attack and has no defenders. Direct 4...♘xe5 (<C>) earns you 5 points.

Overly aggressive ideas fail miserably: 4...♙c5?? (-2 points for) 5.♖xg4 or 4...♖h4? 5.♙g3 or 4...♘xf2? (-1 point for <D>) 5.♙xf2 ♖h4+ 6.♙g3 ♙c5+ 7.♙e3 and White is winning in every variation!

Question #8

(8) Training Position: Opening



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	50%	73%	74%	83%	100%	100%
B	-1	26%		11%	8%		
C		24%	27%	8%	9%		
D				7%			

2 A	5	88%	84%	93%	100%	100%	100%
B		7%	8%	7%			
C			8%				
D	-1	5%					

8-1 This position can occur in one of the variations from the Scotch Defense after 1.♞e4 ♞e5 2.♞f3 ♞c6 3.♞d4 ♞xd4 4.♞xd4 ♞c5 5.♞xc6.

The direct 5...♞bxc6 (<C>) is not very popular as it leaves Black's ♞ structure somewhat damaged. Even worse is 5...♞dxc6 (<D>) since after 6.♞xd8+ ♞xd8, Black loses the right to castle while still getting his ♞s messed up.

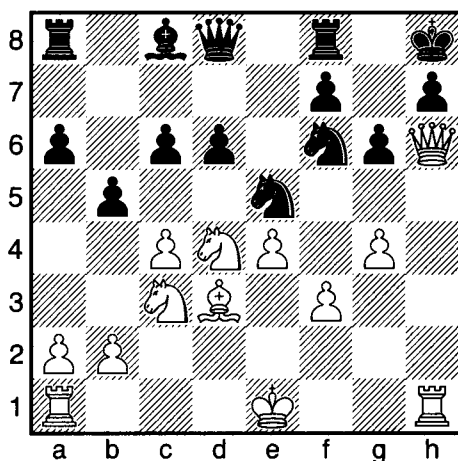
The blunder 5...♞h4?? is penalized (-1 point for). After 6.♞d4 White keeps the extra piece.

The modern theory suggests 5...♞f6 (5 points for <A>), attacking the ♞ and threatening *checkmate* on f2. The latter can't be ignored and, after Black regains the ♞, White has only a nominal advantage.

8-2 Black's somewhat damaged ♞ structure on the ♞-side that resulted after 5...♞bxc6 is a good clue for future plans of both ♞s. White usually stays away from the open b-file and sends his ♞ to the ♞-side (5 points for <A>). For the same reason, Black shouldn't send his ♞ to the ♞-side either! You lose 1 point for getting double error of sending both ♞s to the ♞-side (<D>).

Specifics of the ♞ structure serve as one of the leading indicators of future plans.

Question #9



White to Move!

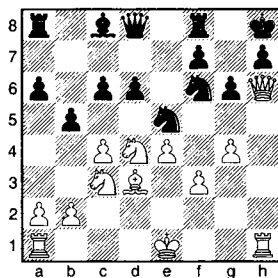
9 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

9 - II What is the best move?

A	1. 0-0-0
B	1. ♖d4xc6
C	1. ♗g4-g5
D	1. ♖a1-d1

(9) Hort,V – Byrne,R Varna,1962



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		13%	7%				
B		9%	6%				
C	1	35%	36%	36%	8%		
D	5	43%	51%	64%	92%	100%	100%

2 A	1	49%	25%	14%	9%		
B	5	26%	34%	50%	83%	100%	100%
C		25%	37%	36%	8%		
D			4%				

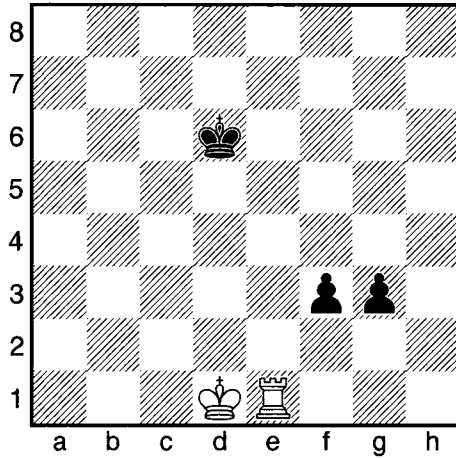
9-1 White's attack on the h-file is unstoppable! You get 5 points for <D>. 1 point, if you thought that White was only better (<C>).

9-2 Your thought process should be along these steps –

- Wow! 1. ♖xh7 is almost a *checkmate*,
- How to drive away the ♜f6 that defends the ♖h7?
- Can I play the direct 1. ♗g5? No, it is not enough due to 1... ♜d3+ and 2... ♜h5!
- What if I play 1. ♜d5 and attack the ♜f6? Nope, the ♖ on c6 is guarding d5.
- How about 1. ♜xc6, removing the ♖c6 and getting access to d5?
- Yes!! 1. ♜c6!! it is (5 points for)

After 1... ♜xc6 (in-between 1... ♜d3+ doesn't change anything after 2. ♜f1) 2. ♜d5 the defender of h7 will be removed. You get partial credit for 1.0–0–0 (1 point for <A>). I would expect this answer to be selected if you thought that White was only better. If you thought that White was winning, then 1.0–0–0 is too slow and you don't deserve the 1 point.

Question #10



White to Move!

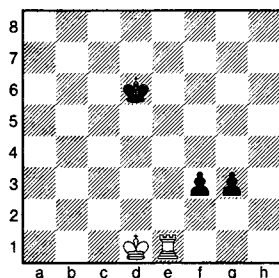
10 - I What result do you expect?

A	White Wins
B	Black Wins
C	Draw
D	Can go either way

10 - II What to do after 1.♔d1-d2 ♖f3-f2?

A	2. ♜e1-d1
B	2. ♜e1-f1
C	2. ♜e1-h1
D	2. ♔d2-e2

(10) Prokesh, L 1946

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	5	12%	26%	39%	58%	84%
	B		25%	9%			
	C	1	63%	74%	52%	42%	16%
	D	-1					

2	A	5		50%	50%	67%	90%
	B	-1	25%				5%
	C	-1			7%		
	D		75%	50%	43%	33%	5%

10-1 From a strategic standpoint, connected ♖s on the 3d rank (6th for White) are often said to be stronger than the ♘. However, White ♖ is very close to the battlefield and is able to help the ♘. Not only White can avoid losing, he even has a tricky winning resource! 5 points for <A>. If you thought White could only get a Draw (<C>), you get 1 point.

10-2 After 1.♖d2, White is ready to attack the ♖s with his ♖. Black plays 1...♗f2 attacking the ♘ and preparing 2...♗g2. Direct 2.♖e2 (<D>) secures a Draw after 2...♖xe1 ♖+ 3.♖xe1 ♖e5 4.♖f1! (4.♖e2?? is losing 4...♖f4 5.♖f1 ♖f3 6.♖g1 ♗g2) ♖f4 5.♖g2 etc...

Moving the ♘ to f1 or h1, or anywhere but d1, lets Black follow through with his threat and after 2...♗g2, to get the ♖, reaching a winning position. You lose 1 point for selecting either or <C>.

The only move is 2.♘d1! (5 points for <A>) placing the ♘ in an “ambush.” After 2...♗g2 (else 3.♖e3) 3.♖e2+! the intermediate check forces Black to move the ♖. Next, 3.♖xf2! and White picks up Black ♖s just in time.

Interim Report: Questions 1 - 10

I strongly encourage you to complete the test in several attempts and to take your time in answering each question. I am including the interim reports so that you can see your relative strength prior to completing the entire test. This should satisfy and encourage you not to hurry through the test questions.

Also, if you choose to take the test again in the future, you can quickly compare your old and new results to see if you are making progress.

From **Table 1-1**, get your rating by matching your score. If your score happens to be between the points in the table, approximate your rating by “eyeballing” or by using basic interpolation.

Table 1-1 Score to Rating Conversion

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	807	55	1437
10	814	60	1669
15	821	65	1828
20	842	70	2031
25	873	75	2135
30	962	80	2228
35	1042	85	2303
40	1140	90	2394
45	1165	95	2480
50	1294	100	2500

Example 1: User’s Score is **65**; User’s Rating is estimated at **1828**

Example 2: User’s Score is **84**; User Rating is approximately **2290** or, using interpolation, is estimated at **2288**

Interpolation: $2228 + (2303 - 2228) * (84 - 80) / (85 - 80) = 2288$

From **Table 1-2** (see next page), you can figure out how many points you need to score in order to have a better result than 50% of the players overall and in a given rating group.

Table 1-2 *Score to 50th Percentile Conversion*

Rating Group	Score
Overall	69
2400+	93
2200-2400	88
1800-2200	81
1400-1800	63
1000-1400	55
Unrated-1000	42

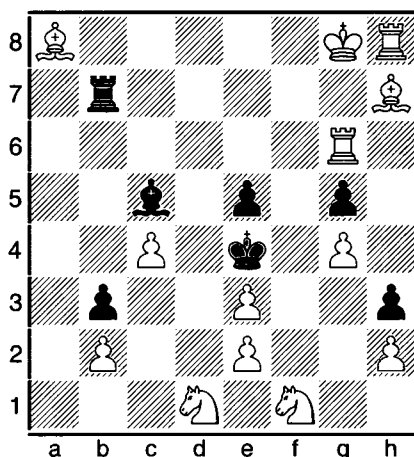
Example 1: User's Score is 65. User did better than 50% of players rated "1400-1800". Also, User is just 4 points short from being better than 50% of all of the players who took the test.

Example 2: User's Score is 84. User did better than 50% of players rated "1800-2200" and only 4 points short of being better than 50% of the players rated "2200-2400" who took the test.



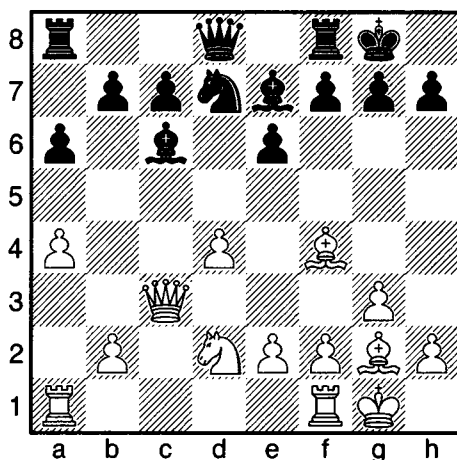
Let's Take a Break:

Q: You have worked hard on finding the best moves and I came up with a little more "challenging" task. What is the worst move that White could play in the following diagram?



A: With every other move leading to an instant checkmate, $1. \text{Bc6+}$, is truly the "worst" move here. By blocking the Δ on a8 it allows $1... \text{Bxh7}$. So what was easier, searching for the best moves or doing the opposite?

Question #11



Black to Move!

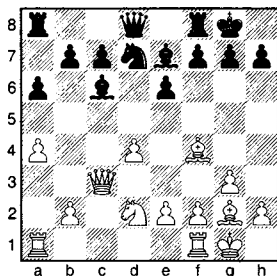
11 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

11 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖d7-b6
B	1...♙c6-d5
C	1...♖d7-b8
D	1...♙c6×g2

(11) Umezina, G. - Fischer, R USA, 2000



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A					8%	4%	
B	1	25%	25%	36%	33%	32%	
C	5	50%	25%	57%	59%	64%	100%
D		25%	50%	7%			

2 A	-1	30%					
B	-1	24%	11%	14%			
C		28%	55%	29%	42%	41%	38%
D	5	18%	34%	57%	58%	59%	62%

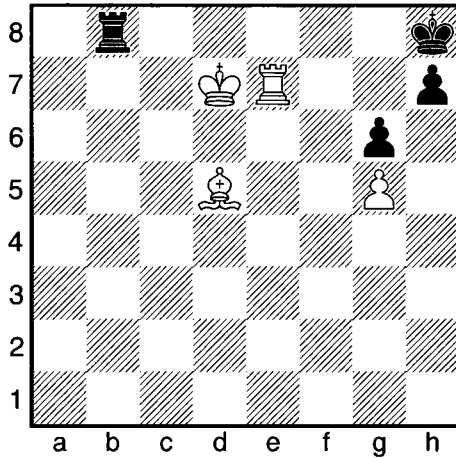
11-1 First of all, don't try to find this game in any of the books devoted to the World Champion **Bobby Fischer**. My student, Master **Bob Fischer** was playing Black. You will find other interesting examples from his games in the test. While it looks like White has an advantage, you only get 1 point for selecting . White has initiative thanks to the pressure on the c-file and advantage in space. However, Black has a direct way to neutralize it and reach a nearly equal position. You get 5 points for choice <C>.

11-2 White is threatening **1.♙xc6** winning a ♖. Additionally the ♖ on c7 is a potential target, if Black ♙ leaves c6. Since both **1...♜b6?** (<A>) and **1...♙d5?** () give up a ♖ without a fight, you lose 1 point for selecting either one. After the natural **1...♙xg2** White has a "nasty" in-between move **2.♙xc7** grabbing a ♖ prior to recapturing the ♙ on g2. In the game Black settled for a passive **1...♜b8** (<C>) in order to save a ♖.

Well, if this resembled your thought process, you missed an opportunity to launch a counterattack against the misplaced White pieces. After, **1...♙xg2! 2.♙xc7** (In case of **2.♜xg2**, Black is fine after **2...♞c8** preparing **3...♙c5**) **♞e8 3.♜xg2 ♞c8 4.♞a5 ♜f6 5.♙e4** (otherwise ♜d5 and ♙b4 trapping White ♞) **♞d7**, Black has a strong initiative.

You get 5 points for choice <D> - **1...♙xg2**. However, if you never intended to sacrifice a ♖ and missed the **2.♙xc7** idea completely, then award yourself with only 1 point.

Question #12



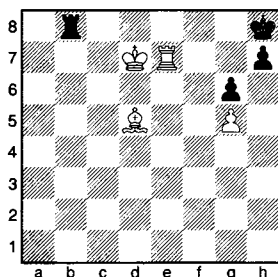
White to Move!

12 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	White will easily Win
B	White has a small chance to Win
C	Black will easily Draw
D	White wants to trade the ♖s

12 - II In which line were the best moves played?

A	1. ♖e7-e8+ ♜b8×e8
B	1. ♖e7-f7 ♜b8-g8
C	1. ♖e7-f7 ♜h8-g8
D	1. ♖e7-e8+ ♜h8-g7

(12) Portisch,L - Dlugy,M *Wijk aan Zee, 1990*

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		25%	30%	7%	17%	12%	
B	5	42%	41%	57%	71%	76%	92%
C	1	5%	24%	29%	12%	12%	8%
D	-1	28%	5%	7%			

2 A		29%	18%	7%			
B		35%	46%	41%	25%	16%	
C	5	31%	36%	52%	75%	84%	100%
D	-2	5%					

12-1 Trading ♖s is a big mistake and is penalized (-1 point for <D>). The resulting position would be an easy Draw, once Black plays ♜h7-h6. After ♜xh6 White is left with the h-♜ and the ♙ of wrong color (light squared ♙ vs. square h8 being dark), which is always a Draw (see question #4). I don't see a clear win for White, nor can I see an easy Draw (1 point for <C>). The bottom line - White has small winning chances (5 points for).

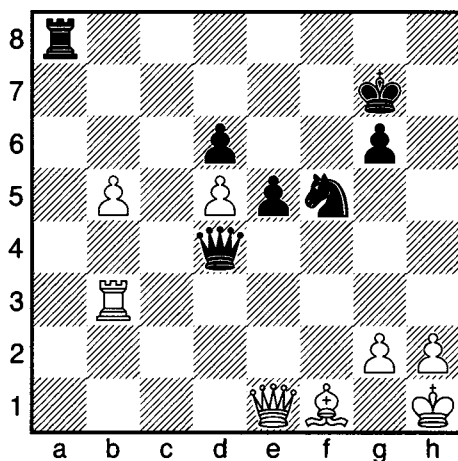
12-2 As stated in #12-1, trading ♖s leads to an immediate Draw after **1.♞e8+? ♜xe8** (<A>) **2.♙xh6 ♜h6** and White has a "wrong" ♙. I hope you didn't blunder the ♖ - **1.♞e8+ ♙g7??** (-2 points for <D>) after **2.♞xb8**.

White's best chance to win is **1.♞f7**, since Black has only 2 moves and one of them loses immediately. In the game, Black played a natural **1... ♞g8?** () but had to resign after a crushing blow - **2.♞xh7!!** White was able to convert his material advantages into a winning ♜ endgame. Here is a possible variation **2...♙xh7 3.♙xg8+ ♙xg8 4.♙e8 ♙g7 5.♙e7 ♙g8 6.♙f6 ♙h7 7.♙f7 ♙h8 8.♙xg6 ♙g8** (*Opposition* doesn't matter since White ♙ is on the 6th rank) **9.♙h6 ♙h8 9.♙g6 ♙g7**, etc...

After, **1...♙g8!** (5 points for <C>) White wouldn't gain much from the *discovered check*. One possible winning attempt recommended by **Alex Yermolinsky** is **2.♙c7! ♞f8 3.♞d7 ♙h8 4.♞e7** and Black is forced to play **4...♜h6**, which would lead to a complex ♙+♞+♙ vs. ♙+♞ endgame with Black ♙ being caught in a bad spot.

Simplification (even with some material loss) in order to reach a known position is one of the key resources in the Endgame.

Question #13



White to Move!

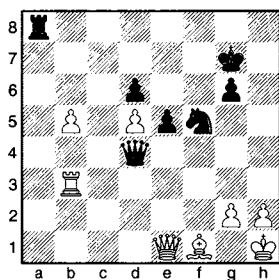
13 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	White is Better
B	White is Winning
C	Black has Ample Compensation for the ♠
D	Black is Winning

13 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖b3-b1
B	1. ♖b3-b4
C	1. ♠b5-b6
D	1. ♖b3-d3

(13) Karpov,A - Taimanov,M Leningrad 1977



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		22%	37%	39%	25%	9%	5%
B	-1	34%	28%	12%	8%		
C	5	20%	27%	31%	47%	71%	81%
D	1	24%	8%	18%	20%	21%	14%

2 A	5	50%	21%	42%	37%	78%	90%
B	-1		5%	12%	8%		
C			47%	29%	50%	13%	10%
D		50%	27%	17%	5%	9%	

13-1 In his memoirs, grandmaster **Mark Taimanov** ranked this game above all other games from his distinguished career.

In the diagram, White has an extra ♖. This is not just any ♖, but a very dangerous passed ♖ on b5 that already made it into the enemy's territory. Moreover, it is ready to advance even further supported by White ♙. However, Black has very active pieces – centralized ♚, well posted ♘ and the ♙ that is ready to attack along the a-file, or h-file, or both.

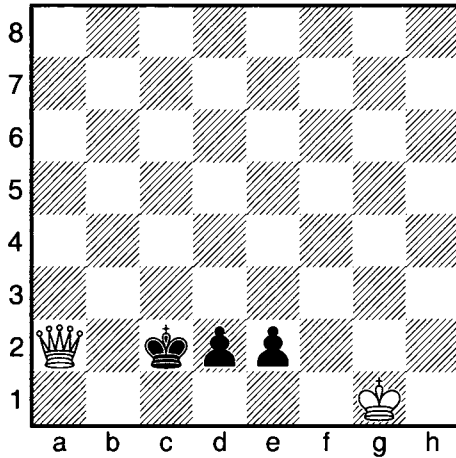
Ignoring Black's threat cost White dearly in the game. Both sides should play cautiously; I evaluate the position as dynamically balanced. The best answer is <C>- 5 points. You get 1 point for overestimating Black's position (<D>). You lose 1 point for thinking White is winning ().

13-2 The game saw one of the rare tactical breakdowns of the great champion **Anatoly Karpov**. He didn't see the hidden danger of **1...♙a1** and proceeded with the bold **1.♖b6?** (<C>). But after **1...♙a1 2.♙b1** (2.♙e2 ♙d5) Black unloaded **2...♘g3+!!** and Karpov had to resign. After **3.♖xg3** (3.♙xg3 ♙xh1) ♙a8, White couldn't stop **4...♙h8#**

Attacking Black ♙ doesn't work - **1.♙b4?** (-1 point for) losses at once after **1...♙a1**. Weak is **1.♙d3?!** (<C>) ♙a1 2.♙e2 ♙c5 and White is in trouble. The accurate **1.♙b1** (5 points for <A>) would promptly have taken care of Black's threats and allowed this dynamic battle to continue!

*If you have a different opinion about the evaluation after **1.♙b1**, play it out against a friend or computer.*

Question #14



Black to Move!

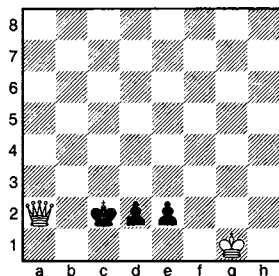
14 - I What result do you expect?

A	White Wins
B	Draw
C	Black Wins
D	Can finish either way

14 - II Where Black ♔ should go?

A	1...♔c2-d1
B	1...♔c2-c3
C	1...♔c2-d3
D	Both B or C are safe options

(14) Kling,J & Horowitz,B 1851

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		11%		7%	8%		
B	5	49%	74%	93%	92%	100%	100%
C	-1	31%	26%				
D	-1	9%					

2 A	-2	18%		7%			
B	5	30%	25%	33%	37%	32%	48%
C		21%	10%	17%			
D	1	31%	65%	43%	63%	68%	52%

14-1 Even dealing with a single ♖ on the 2d rank (7th for White) supported by the ♙ is not easy for the ♜. The main idea in such endgames is to “buy” time so the ♜ can come over and help the ♜ to “outmuscle” the opponent’s ♖ away from the ♖. Against two ♖s, winning is almost impossible. Even though his ♖ is relatively close and ready help the ♜, White can’t do better than to settle for a *perpetual check*! You get 5 points for . Black has no winning chances and you get 1 point penalty for choosing <C> or <D>.

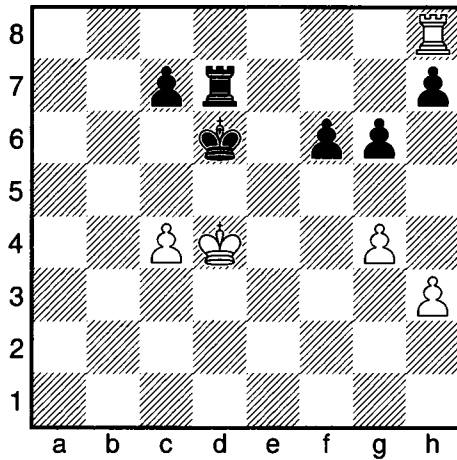
14-2 The “helpmate” after 1...♖d1?? 2.♜b1# is punished (-2 points for <D>).

After 1...♖c3 (5 points for) White can't make any progress and should settle for *perpetual check* 2.♜a5+ ♖c2 3.♜c5+ ♖d1 4.♜h5 ♖c1 etc...

Similar looking 1...♖d3 (<C>) is in fact losing! After 2.♜b3+ White ♜, all of a sudden, becomes very active. The ♜ is able to boss around Black ♖, forcing it to go towards the White ♖, thus enabling the latter to participate in the attack. Here are the variations: 2...♖d4 (2...♖e4 3.♜c2+ ♖e3 4.♜c3+ and 5.♜x d2) 3.♜b4+ ♖d3 4.♜b5+ ♖e3 (else 5.♜xe2) 5.♜g5+ ♖d3 6.♜f5+ and, depending on Black move, 6...♖e3 7.♜f2+ or 6...♖c3 7. ♜f3+ or 6...♖c4 7. ♜e4+. In either case White wins the ♖e2, while not allowing the promotion of the ♖d, thus reaching a standard winning endgame ♜ vs. ♖+♖ on the 2d rank (7th For White). <D> earns you 1 point.

Note that 1...♖c1 (not listed among the choices) would also have been a safe alternative (Foygel).

Question #15



Black to Move!

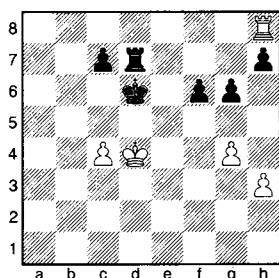
15 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	Draw is a likely outcome
B	Black has a clear Winning plan
C	Black has some Winning chances
D	White is Better

15 - II Continue after 51...♔d6-c6+ 52.♕d4-c3

A	52...♜f6-f5
B	52...♞d7-f7
C	52...♝c6-c5
D	52...♞g6-g5

(15) Tal,M - Spassky,B Tbilisi, 1965

**Black to Move!**

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		18%	6%	17%	8%		
B	5	15%	19%	7%	34%	58%	64%
C	1	55%	75%	76%	58%	42%	36%
D	-1	12%					

2 A		12%				3%	
B	5	25%	75%	86%	83%	93%	92%
C		59%	25%	14%	17%	4%	8%
D		4%					

15-1 Black has a clear winning plan! Choice earns you 5 points. <C> is a reasonable choice that gives you 1 point. Choice <D> costs you 1 point, as the activity of White ♖ is not enough to offset Black's extra ♗, which is ready to take off!

15-2 The following principle is almost always worth following – *the ♗ should be placed behind the passed ♖, no matter if it supports or attacks it.*

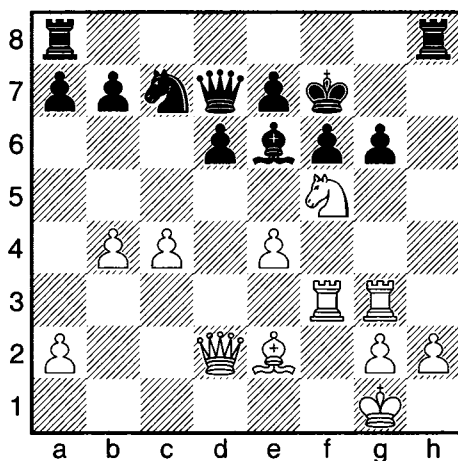
After 52...♗f7! (5 points for) White cannot really do much against the threat of pushing the f-♖, except moving his ♖ over to the f-file. Then, Black ♗ attacks the c-♖ and, ultimately, wins it.

In the meantime Black ♗ on f7 is placed superbly – in addition to supporting advancement of the f-♖ it protects the ♖s on c7 and h7. The game continued: 53.♖d3 ♖f5 54.♖×f5 ♖×f5 55.♗e8 ♖f4 56.♖e2 ♖c5 57.♗e4 ♖b4 58.♖f3 ♖c5 59.♖f2 ♖c3 60.♖e2 ♖f3+ 61.♖f2 ♖f5 62.♗h4 ♖h5 63.♗e4 ♖d3 64.♗h4 ♖d2 65.♗e4 ♖c3 66.♗h4 ♖d3 and White resigned – he ran out of moves!

Black demonstrated a very clear winning plan. Could White's play be improved? Possibly, but the defense would be very difficult anyway.

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

Question #16



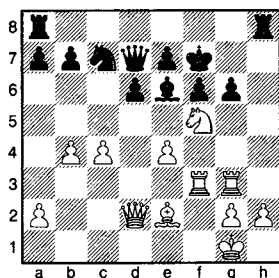
White to Move!

16 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

16 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖g3×g6
B	1. ♜f5-h6+
C	1. ♜f5-d4
D	1. ♜f5×d6+

(16) Eley,B – Harman,R *Hastings II 1971/1972*White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	35%	33%	57%	63%	100%	100%
B	1	46%	22%	36%	37%		
C		16%	45%				
D	-1	3%		7%			

2 A		24%	18%	36%	17%	8%	
B	5	26%	15%	11%	18%	80%	92%
C	1	40%	22%	24%	40%		
D		10%	45%	29%	25%	12%	8%

16-1 White has a strategically dominant position: better placed pieces, more space, and weak Black ♖. Furthermore, it doesn't "cost" White even a single ♖. On top of all these strategic factors, White has a winning tactical idea. You get 5 points for . If you thought that White is only better (<C>), you get 1 point. Black is barely holding on and you are seriously mistaken if you selected <D> (-1 point).

16-2 There is no clear victory after 1. ♖xd6?! (<D>) ♗xd6 3. ♖g5 ♖e8.

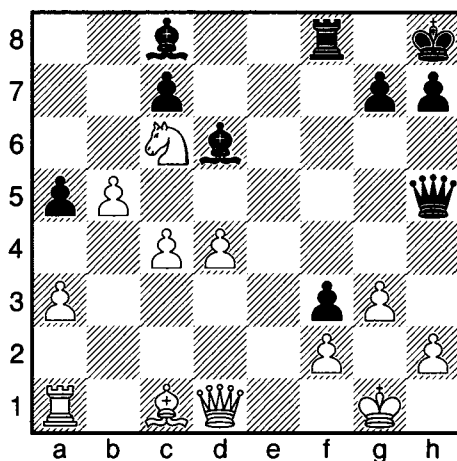
Even worse is 1. ♖xg6 (<A>) ♖xg6 2. ♖g3+ ♖f7 3. ♖g7+ ♖f8 4. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 5. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 and Black ends up with extra material!

Solid, but slow is 1. ♖d4 (1 point for) ♖ag8 and Black is still "alive".

White has a very strong attack after 1. ♖h6+! (5 points for). In fact after the natural 1... ♖g7 Black lost at once. White played the 3-punch series capped with the final "quite" move. The game continued - 2. ♖xg6+!! ♖g6 3. ♖g3+ ♖h7 and now 4. ♖f4! Black is up by a ♖, and White has no immediate threat, but the future *checkmate* on the h-file is unstoppable!

In view of what happened Black should have settled for a tough defense after 1... ♖e8 2. ♖xg6.

Question #17



Black to Move!

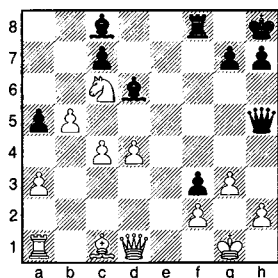
17 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Black is Better
D	Black is Winning

17 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♙d6×g3
B	1...♚h5-h3
C	1...♜f8-e8
D	1...♙c8-d7

(17) Schmid,L – Bhend,E Venice 1953



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		45%	25%	29%	19%		
B		15%	11%	7%	12%		
C		25%	24%	21%	27%	35%	
D	5	15%	40%	43%	42%	65%	100%

2 A	5	7%	50%	68%	75%	72%	92%
B		68%	36%	6%	6%	10%	8%
C		25%	14%	22%	19%	18%	
D				4%			

17-1 For two ♖s Black has an excellent compensation – a lead in development, much better placed pieces and an attack against an already compromised position of White ♔. These positional advantages can be immediately converted into a victory. Black has a nice winning combination. 5 points for <D>

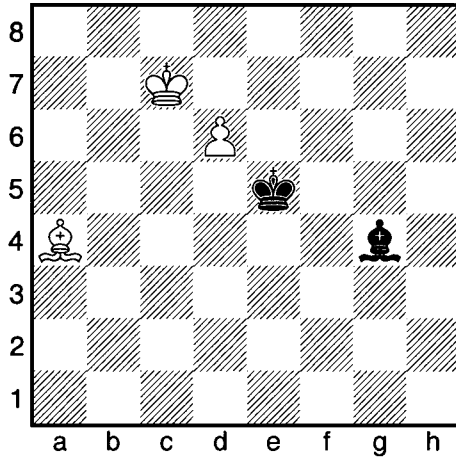
17-2 The direct 1...♚h3 () can be easily stopped via 2.♚f1.

Also, 1...♖e8 (<C>) or 1...♙d7 (<D>) are too slow, after 2.♘e5 White can stabilize his position by giving one ♖ back.

The most forcing is 1...♙xg3! (5 points for <A>) 2. ♖h×g3 (2.♙f×g3 ♙f2+ and 3...♚×d1) ♙h3 and White can't stop 3...♙g2 and 4...♚h1#.

Don't miss an opportunity to convert temporary advantages into a nice material gain.

Question #18



Black to Move!

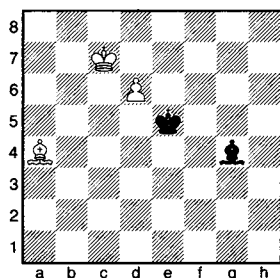
18 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	White is Winning
B	Draw
C	If White was to move, then White would win
D	Both B and C are correct

18 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♔e5-d5
B	1...♔e5-d4
C	1...♔e5-f6
D	1...♖g4-h3

(18) Rabinovich,I



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		50%	36%	7%	11%	10%	8%
B	1	25%	24%	44%	24%	35%	24%
C	1	6%	12%	12%	8%	5%	
D	5	19%	28%	37%	57%	50%	68%

2 A		25%	9%	37%	25%	18%	10%
B	5	8%	25%	16%	58%	82%	90%
C		22%	25%	14%	17%		
D		45%	41%	33%			

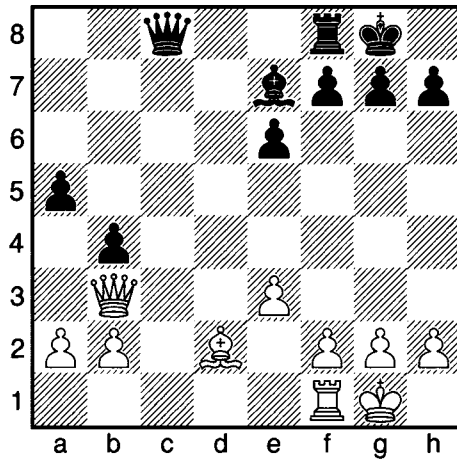
18-1 This is one of the few standard ♔ *Endgame* positions worth memorizing. Since his ♔ can't possibly reach the optimal defensive position (in front of the ♖), Black must rely on his ♔ to continue controlling d7. White's winning plan is to drive the ♔ away, by threatening ♔ exchange. The execution is not very complex, unless Black ♔ can sneak in from behind! Black can Draw, but only if he goes first.

Both and <C> are correct, but when picked separately each earns you only 1 point. You get 5 points for selecting <D>.

18-2 Since Black is defending, he must start the move-selection process by identifying his opponent's threats. White does have a threat (and that is why 018-1 <C> is correct) - after 1.♔d7! White can drive Black ♔ away from controlling d7 and the ♖ will be able to sneak through. For example 1...♔d1 2.♔c8 ♔a4 3.♔b7 and Black can't stop 4.♔c6 clearing the path for the ♖. Since Black can't stop either ♔d7 or ♔c8 from the above variation, he must try to prevent ♔c6, by sending his ♔ to c5. This leaves Black with two moves to choose from - 1...♔d5 or 1...♔d4. Note the problem with 1...♔d5? (<A>) due to 2.♔d7 ♔d1 3.♔c6+ and 4.♖d7. Last, but not the least choice 1...♔d4! (5 points for) secures a Draw. After 2.♔d7 ♔d1 3.♔c8 ♔a4 4.♔b7 Black ♔ arrives just in time - 4...♔c5 and White can't make any progress (thus in 018-1 is correct as well).

Black ♔ should be on c5 when White ♔ is on c7, and on e5 when White ♔ is on e7. Opposition like setup as noted by Yermolinsky.

Question #19



Black to Move!

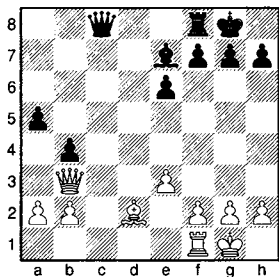
19 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

19 - II What is the best move?

A	1... ♖c8-d7
B	1... ♜f8-d8
C	1... ♔e7-f6
D	1... ♖c8-d8

(19) Tylor,T - Alekhine,A Hastings, 1936



Black to Move!

	Score	0 -	1000-	1400-	1800-	2200-	2400-
		1000	1400	1800	2200	2400	2800
1	A	5	46%	76%	83%	92%	100%
	B		54%	10%	17%	8%	
	C			14%			
	D	-1					

2	A	5	25%	25%	47%	59%	100%
	B		27%	68%	46%	33%	
	C		48%	7%	7%		
	D				8%		

19-1 Black has advantage due to better-placed pieces and more space on the ♔-side. You get 5 points for selecting <A>. Since White has nothing to brag about, you are penalized 1 point for picking <D> - *White is winning*.

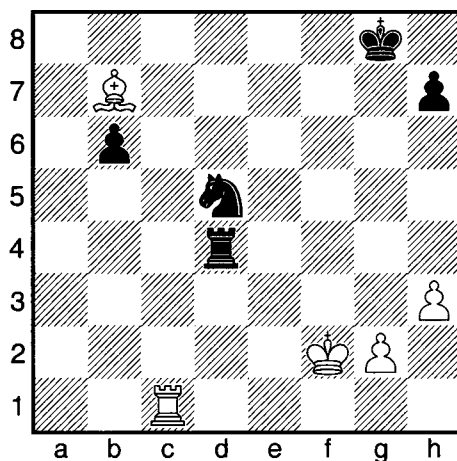
19-2 Let's consider White's ideas first. If White could play ♖c1, allowing the ♙ to go to e1 without blocking the ♖, he would be OK.

Neither 1...♗d8 () nor 1...♙f6 (<C>) address this point as White can respond 2.♖c1. Also, 1...♔d8 (<D>) is weak because Black ♔ is blocking Black ♖.

Thus 1...♔d7! is the best move (5 points for <A>). Now, none of White's options is very pleasant - 2.♙c1 ♖a4, or 2.♔c2 ♗c8, or 2.♗d1 ♗d8 and Black has an advantage in every case.

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

Question #20



White to Move!

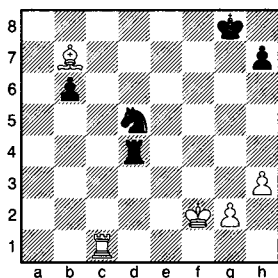
20 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

20 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖c1-c8+
B	1. ♖c1-b1
C	1. ♖c1-c4
D	1. ♙b7xd5+

(20) Kubell, L 1926



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A			20%				
B		9%	10%	21%	21%	4%	
C		50%	49%	15%	12%	5%	
D	5	41%	21%	64%	67%	91%	100%

2 A		20%	35%	31%	27%	12%	8%
B		18%	24%		10%	6%	
C	5	27%	25%	52%	63%	82%	92%
D		35%	16%	17%			

20-1 White can exploit temporary miss-coordination of Black pieces and win right away in this otherwise almost equal position. 5 points for seeing that *White is winning* and choosing <D>.

20-2 White's play is based on the tactical motifs: *double attack* and *in-between move* (♙×d5+). White's actions must be aggressive with direct threats on each move. Otherwise Black can regroup his forces, leaving White with only a slim advantage at best.

Here is the best variation: **1.♖c4!** (5 points for <C>) **♜d2+** (1...♜xc4 2.♙×d5+; 1...♜d1 2.♙e2 ♜g7 3.♜g4+! ♜f6 4.♙×d1 ♜e3+ 5.♙d2 ♜×g4 6.♙×g4 ♜g5 7.♙f3; 1...♜f4+ 2.♙g1 ♜f5 3.♙g4 ♜g5 4.♙h4 ♜e5 5.♜e4) **2.♙e1 ♜d3 3.♙e2 ♜e3+ 4.♙d2 ♜e5 5.♜e4! ♜h5** (5...♜g5 6.♜g4 ♜×g4 7.♙×d5+ and 8.♙×g4) **6.♙g4 ♜×h3 7.♙×d5+** and White wins.

Other 1st move alternatives are not very promising. The tactical attempt **1.♖c8+** (planning ♜d8; <A>) fails due to **1...♙f7 2.♜d8 ♙e6**. Draw is the expected outcome in the ♜ endgame (after 1.♙×d5 [<D>] ♜×d5) even if White wins the b-♙ (1.♙b1 [] ♙f7 2.♙×d5 ♜×d5 3.♜×b6).

Even late in the Endgame, when only a few pieces are left on the board, keep on looking for tactical motifs.

Interim Report: Questions 11 - 20

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

Table 1-2 *Score to Rating Conversion*

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	828	55	1786
10	883	60	1952
15	919	65	2077
20	958	70	2142
25	1022	75	2208
30	1105	80	2291
35	1196	85	2359
40	1249	90	2445
45	1422	95	2459
50	1568	100	2500

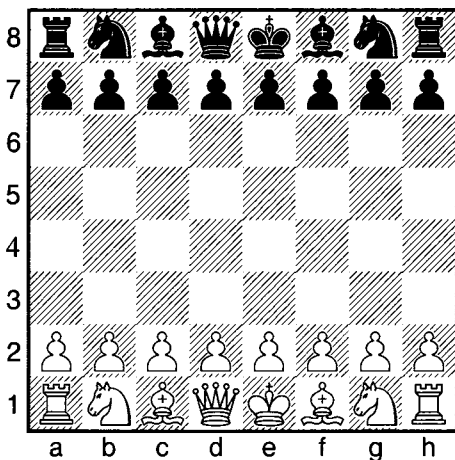
Table 2-2 *Score to 50th Percentile Conversion*

Rating Group	Score
Overall	53
2400+	94
2200-2400	82
1800-2200	60
1400-1800	52
1000-1400	41
Unrated-1000	19

Let's Take a Break:

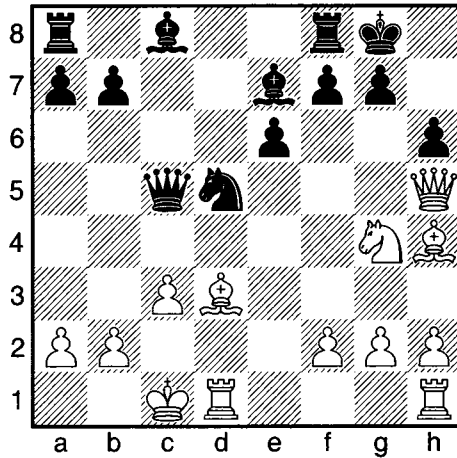


Q: Can you discover the new “opening” variation that enables Black ♖ to get to **e1** in only 4 moves?



A: Here is this “interesting” line 1. ♖e4 ♘h5 2. ♗xh5 ♗xh5 3. ♖e5 ♗x5+ 4. ♗d1 ♖e1+. Do not send this variation to the *Chess Informant* in hopes of getting the *Novelty of the Year* award.

Question #21



Black to Move!

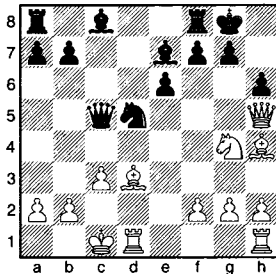
21 - I After 1...♞d5-f4

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

21 - II After 1...♞d5×c3

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

(21) Bondarevsky, I – Zagorovsky, M USSR 1943



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	35%	33%	22%	17%		
	B	23%	17%	17%	15%	17%	
	C	11%	16%	15%	12%	5%	
	D	5	31%	34%	46%	56%	78%

2	A	36%	21%	24%	21%	20%	
	B	2	12%	23%	16%	24%	27%
	C	5	17%	24%	24%	27%	48%
	D		35%	32%	36%	28%	5%

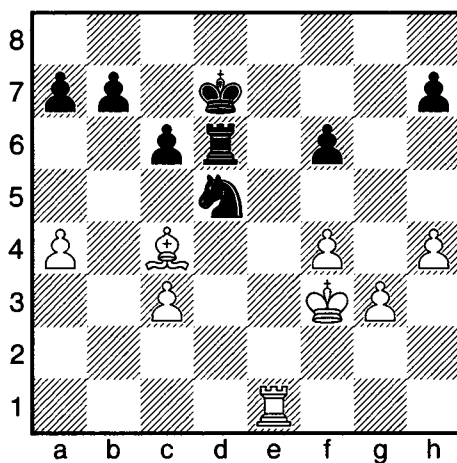
21-1 In this dynamic *Middlegame* position both sides should be on the alert and be prepared to calculate lengthy variations. White's threats on the ♔-side shouldn't be ignored. Indeed Black is mated after the careless **1...♖f4?** Here is the variation **2.♗xh6+ ♕xh6 3.♖xh6 ♗xd3+ (3...♗g6 4.♗xg6 ♕xg6 5.♖xg6+ ♗h8 6.♗d3) 4.♗xd3 ♗xh4 5.♗g3+! ♗xg3 6.♗h×g3** and *checkmate* is unavoidable. You get 5 points for selecting <D>.

21-2 A counterattack via **1...♗xc3!?** is an interesting way to deal with White's threats. Now White has to play precisely in order to avoid getting a worse position. For example after the "bullish" **2.♗xh6+ ♕xh6 3.♖xh6 (3.♖xc5 ♗xa2+ and White is down a ♖ without compensation) ♗e4+! 4.♗b1 ♗g5** White's attack is stalled, while Black keeps the extra ♗.

White's best option is to play **2.♖xc5**. After **2...♗xa2+ 3.♗b1 ♗xc5 4.♗xa2 4...♗f5 and 5...♗g5** Black re-gains the piece using a poor placement of White ♗ and ♗. Nevertheless, I prefer White's chances after **5.♗e5 ♗g5 6.♗g3 ♗f4 7.♗f3 ♕xg3 8.♕xg3**. For the ♖, White has very active pieces and pressure in the center and on the ♔-side. After **8...♗g7 9.♗e4** Black has difficulties making moves. You get 5 points for selecting <C> and 2 points for .

Practice the final position (after 9.♗e4) against a friend or computer.

Question #22



White to Move!

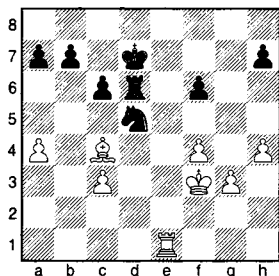
22 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Better

22 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖c4-d3
B	1. ♖c4xd5
C	1. ♞e1-c1
D	1. ♠g3-g4

(22) Alekhine,A - Euwe,M Netherlands, 1937



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		14%	7%				
B		25%	25%	21%	16%		
C		37%	43%	29%	17%	18%	
D	5	24%	25%	50%	67%	82%	100%

2 A	5	14%	25%	51%	58%	76%	92%
B		60%	24%	36%	17%	9%	
C		17%	26%	13%	8%	15%	8%
D		9%	25%		17%		

22-1 This strategic *Endgame* is extremely educational. It shows very clearly the superiority of the ♖ over the ♜ in open positions with an unbalanced ♙ structure. The ♖ can simultaneously support his ♙s on the ♖-side, while slowing down advancement of Black ♙s on the ♗-side. At the same time, the ♜ can only do one thing and must commit to either going after the weak White ♙s or defending Black's weaknesses. *White is better* and you get 5 points for <D>!

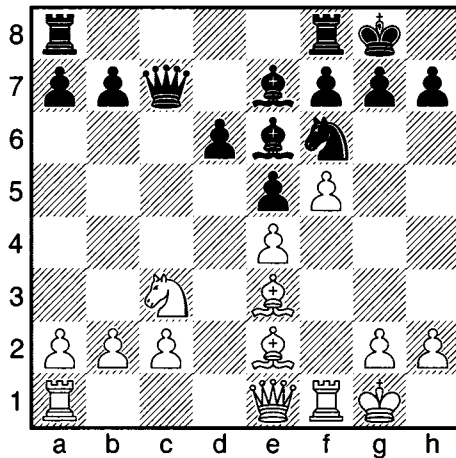
22-2 There is no time to defend the ♙s; White loses his advantage after either 1.♙×d5 () or 1.♙c1 (<C>). White must achieve significant progress on the ♖-side before Black gets too active on the ♗-side.

The active 1.♙g4 is interesting, but the ♙ blocks the path of White ♖.

You get 5 points only if your move was 1.♙d3! (<A>) attacking Black ♙ and forcing it to move forward, where either White ♖ or ♙ can easily attack it. Here is a sample line - 1...♙h6 (After 1...♙h5 2.♙g6 or 1...♜×c3 2.♙×h7 White ♙s are unstoppable) 2.♙f5+ ♖d8 3.♖g4 and White is in charge!

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer in order to learn additional nuances of ♖ vs. ♜ Endgames.

Question #23



Black to Move!

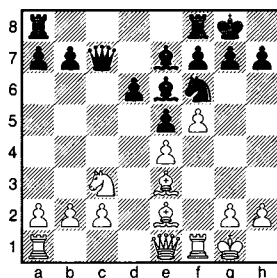
23 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

23 - II What is the best move?

A	1... ♖f6xe4
B	1... ♕e6-c4
C	1... ♕e6-d7
D	1... ♕e6-c8

(23) Smyslov, V - Rudakovsky, I Moscow, 1945



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		27%	14%	7%			
B	5	47%	60%	76%	74%	81%	100%
C	1	26%	20%	17%	26%	19%	
D			6%				

2 A	-2	6%					
B		86%	64%	79%	67%	43%	12%
C	5	8%	25%	21%	25%	57%	88%
D	-1		11%		8%		

23-1 White has some space advantage, pressure in center and on the ♔-side. Black's position is solid but passive. *White is better* (5 points for). You get 1 point if you thought the position was *Nearly Equal* (<C>).

23-2 Blunder 1...♖×e4?? is penalized (-2 points for <A>) as it loses a piece.

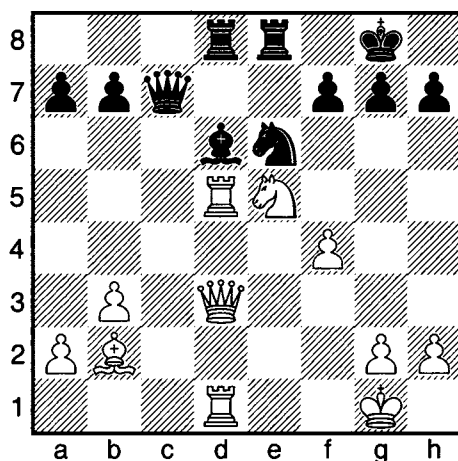
Retreat 1...♙c8 (-1 point for <D>) is too passive.

To choose correctly from the remaining two moves you must set your priorities right. The square d5 is a major "prize" in the current position. White ♖ is eyeing this great outpost and Black must be concerned with not having enough defenders to control it. Thus, preserving the light colored ♙ that can help in defending d5 is a top priority. After 1...♙d7! and next 2...♙c6 Black would have the option of swapping his ♙ for White ♖.

Instead in the game Black played the "active" 1...♙c4?! () not realizing that it was a strategic error. After 2.♙×c4 ♖×c4 3.♙g5 White was able to increase his advantage by eliminating the last defender of d5 (after ♙×f6) and posting his ♖ there.

If you selected 1...♙d7! (<C>), you earned 5 points.

Question #24



White to Move!

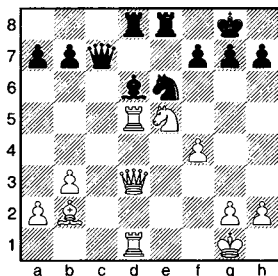
24 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

24 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖g2-g3
B	1. ♔d3-g3
C	1. ♚d5×d6
D	1. ♔g1-h1

(24) Thomas,G – Euwe,M Nottingham, 1936

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	62%	57%	54%	67%	89%	93%
B		16%	32%	31%	25%	11%	7%
C			11%	15%	8%		
D		22%					

2 A		11%	18%	24%	23%	13%	7%
B		14%	21%	12%	10%		
C	5	60%	61%	64%	67%	87%	93%
D	-2	15%					

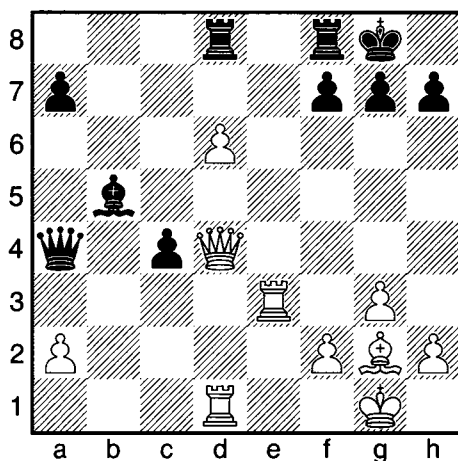
24-1 White was able to build up enough attackers on the d-file and thus, the pinned ♙ on d6 is a dead duck. So, is White really winning? Yes, indeed and you get 5 points (<A>) if you recognized that Black's tricky defense (see 24-2) fails. If you selected <A> expecting to win the ♙ on d6, but missed Black's defensive idea all together, you only get 2 points.

24-1 The first question you should ask - Why not win the ♙ at once? Indeed, White has 3 attackers – the ♙ and pair of ♖s, against only two defenders – the ♙ and the ♖. But wait, after 1.♖×d6 ♖×d6 2.♙×d6 Black has 2...♖d8! “x-raying” the ♙ and the ♖ on d1. Now 3.♙×c7 loses because Black has an in-between 3...♖×d1+ and then recaptures the ♙ via 4...♗×c7. If finding this line made you select <A> or , give yourself 1 point. If you selected <C>, but missed this line all together, give yourself 2 points instead of 5.

Only those who saw Black's defense and played 1.♖×d6 anyway, because they found a refutation, deserve the full 5 points. So what is the refutation of Black's defense? After 2...♖d8! White should play 3.♗d7! maintaining the extra piece. Trying to use the *pin* to regain it fails. For example: 3...♙×d6 4.♖×d6 ♗f8? 5.♗f6+.

In the game, White played the slow 1.♗g3 (<A>) and eventually lost. Also, it is hard to explain 1.♗h1 (<D>) and, even if you try, you still lose 2 points because it accomplishes nothing, and allows 1...♗×f4.

Question #25



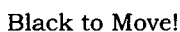
Black to Move!

25 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

25 - II After 1...♔×a2

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Black is Better
D	Black is Winning

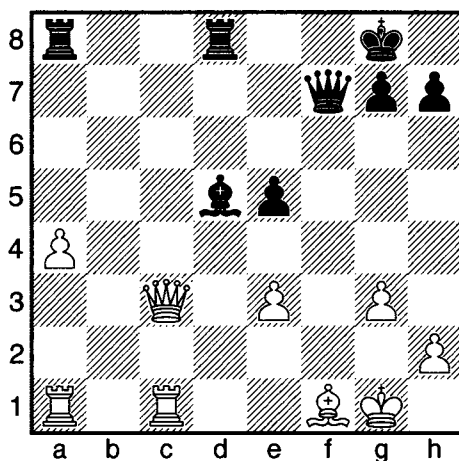


	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
A		36%	25%	10%		21%	
B	5	14%	25%	61%	70%	79%	100%
C		21%	11%	22%	17%		
D		29%	39%	7%	13%		

2	A	5	25%	22%	57%	67%	100%	100%
	B		41%	46%	29%			
	C		26%	20%	7%	25%		
	D		8%	12%	7%	8%		

However, don't expect **2...♖a1** to lead to an easy knockout. Of course, after **2...♔c2** (the only square available for the ♔) White can close the trap with **3.♕e4** winning the ♔. But how about **2...♗x d6!** If this came as a surprise you don't deserve the full credit even if you selected <A> (give yourself only 2 points instead of 5). Fortunately, White is still winning after **3.♕e5!** and nearly the entire Black army is under attack – ♗a2, ♗d6 and ♗b5. Black has one more defensive attempt to deal with - **3...♗f6!**, but after **4.♕d5+!** the game is over!

Question #26



White to Move!

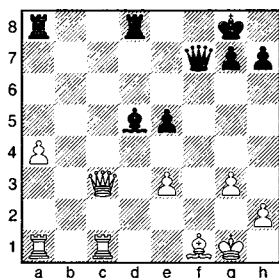
26 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Better

26 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♔f1-g2
B	1. ♔f1-c4
C	1. ♚c1-c2
D	1. ♙c3×e5

(26) Alatortsev, V – Konstantinopolsky, A Tbilisi, 1937

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	-1	12%	32%			
	B		28%	18%	26%		14%
	C		8%		14%	42%	8%
	D	5	52%	50%	60%	58%	78%

2	A	1	26%	25%	21%	33%	15%	22%
	B		32%	54%	53%	50%	36%	
	C	5	23%	21%	14%	17%	49%	78%
	D	-1	19%		12%			

26-1 In this dynamic position, White has an extra ♖, while Black has some compensation since his pieces are more active and White ♔'s position is compromised. However, except for the weak *a8-h1* diagonal, Black has no direct targets. And the mating threats along the diagonal are easily manageable, thanks to the presence of the ♕f1. To sum up, *White is better* (5 points for <D>).

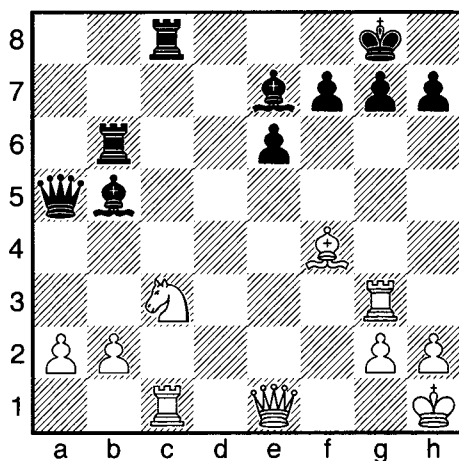
26-2 The direct **1...♗f3** with serious mating threats must be addressed right away. Thus, we eliminate **1.♗×e5?** (-1 points for <D>). Now, it is getting trickier – to make the proper selection you must combine both strategic and tactical skills.

Having an extra ♖, White might attempt to simplify position by trading pieces. However, **1.♙c4?** (), which was actually played in the game, is a mistake. After the tactical shot **1...♙×c4 2.♗×c4 ♖d1!+** (motifs: *deflection and overloading*) **3.♙g2 ♗×c4** White lost the ♖ and had to resign.

This leaves us with either **1.♙g2** or **1.♖c2** (and **1...♗f3** can be met by **2.♙g2**). Despite White's interest in simplification, there are at least two *strategic* reasons for preserving the ♙ and selecting **1.♖c2**. First of all, White ♙ is an important defender of the weakened position of White ♔.

Additionally, White's material advantage of only one ♖ will likely be insufficient in the ♖ endgame. Thus, by keeping the ♙s, White gets some additional options for converting his advantage. 5 points for **1.♖c2** (<C>) and only 1 point for **1.♙g2** (<A>)

Question #27



White to Move!

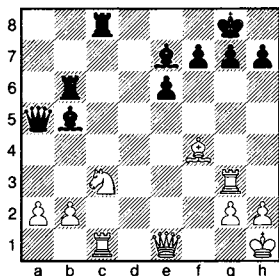
27 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

27 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♔f4-c7
B	1. ♚e1-e5
C	1. ♞c3-d5
D	1. ♞c3×b5

(27) Spassky,B – Averkin,O Moscow, 1973



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	55%	52%	62%	83%	94%	100%
B	1	28%	42%	38%	17%	6%	
C			6%				
D		17%					

2 A	5	25%	52%	64%	67%	88%	96%
B		12%	25%	21%	16%		
C		47%	23%	7%	17%	12%	4%
D		16%		8%			

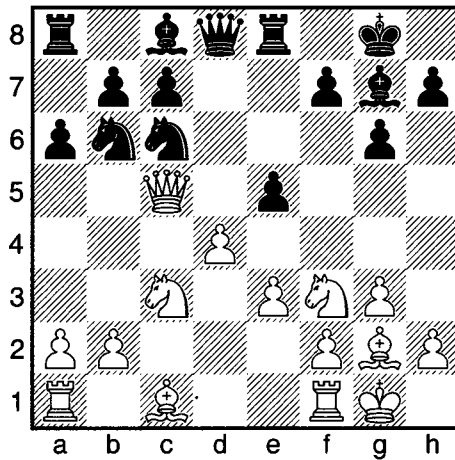
27-1 The difference in this position is *activity* and *coordination* of pieces. While Black's pieces are uncoordinated, misplaced and unprotected, White's pieces are *zeroing in* on the main target – the ♔. White has several tactical motifs and can immediately convert his positional advantages into a nice material gain. *White is winning* – 5 points for <A>. You get 1 point if you didn't see the coming knockout punch and thought *White was only better* ().

27-2 There are several tactical motifs that White should consider during his move selection. Unprotected ♖a5 and ♜c8 are subject to various *discovered attacks* if the ♘c3 moves. The ♙e7 is also unprotected. The ♜b6 and the ♖a5 are on the same diagonal and may be subject to a ♙ *pin*. Black ♔ is a target as well; the ♜g3 only needs minimal support to hit the ♙g7. Even the ♙b5 can potentially be in trouble via the *pin* on the 5th rank.

Well, now back to the moves: 1. ♘b5?! (<D>) leads to trades and not worth considering much. 1. ♖e5 () is a threat that can be easily neutralized after 1... ♙g6 or 1... ♙f8. Interesting is 1. ♘d5?! (<C>) but White gains nothing but trouble because of his own problem – *weak back rank*. After, 1... ♖xe1 2. ♜xe1 ♙d5 3. ♜xe7 ♜f6! Black is winning.

This leaves us with the explosive 1. ♙c7! (5 points for <A>) *pinning* the ♜b6. After 1... ♜xc7 2. ♖e5! both the unprotected ♜ on c7 and weak ♔ (♙g7) are hit simultaneously. White wins material.

Question #28



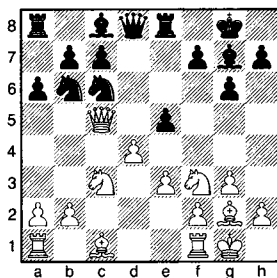
White to Move!

28 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

28 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖d4-d5
B	1. ♜f3xe5
C	1. ♜c3-e2
D	1. ♜f1-d1

(28) Zamanov,A - Yuferov,S *Moscow, 1989*

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	31%	25%	29%	50%	84%	92%
B		50%		36%	17%	16%	8%
C		12%	75%	35%	33%		
D	-1	7%					

2 A	-1	10%	16%	36%	27%		
B		17%	28%		25%	37%	12%
C	5	21%	18%	43%	48%	63%	88%
D	-1	52%	38%	21%			

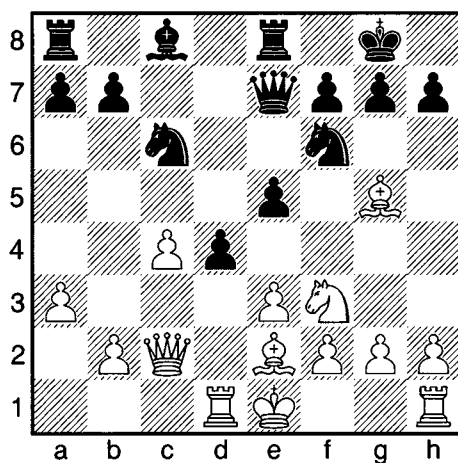
28-1 I don't see any reasons to consider White to be winning here, thus 1 point penalty for <D>. Black is better developed and is more active in the center. The misplaced White ♔, which is on the brink of being trapped, is another reason for giving Black the upper hand. 5 points for <A>.

28-2 The direct threat – taking the ♖ on d4 is “peanuts” in comparison to the sudden ♜f8 trapping White ♔. If you fell right into this trap by playing 1.♖d5? (<A>) or 1.♜d1? (<D>) you lose 1 point.

Unfortunately for White, 1.♞e5 () doesn't solve the “♔ problem” either. After 1...♜e5! White loses the ♞ since he can't recapture back without losing the ♔ (2.♖e5 ♜f8!).

You get 5 points for selecting 1.♞e2 (<C>), which simultaneously protects the ♖d4 and provides an “escape route” for the ♔. Still, after 1...♜f5 Black has better chances.

Question #29



Black to Move!

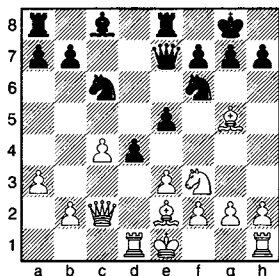
29 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Better

29 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖d4×e3
B	1...♔c8-g4
C	1...♗d4-d3
D	1...♗h7-h6

(29) Pinter,J - Hurme,H Helsinki, 1983

**Black to Move!**

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	10%	54%	39%	74%	95%	100%
B	1	61%	25%	61%	26%	5%	
C		9%	21%				
D		20%					

2 A		10%	45%	27%	8%	5%	
B		25%	7%	22%	17%		
C	5	20%	48%	46%	75%	95%	100%
D		45%		5%			

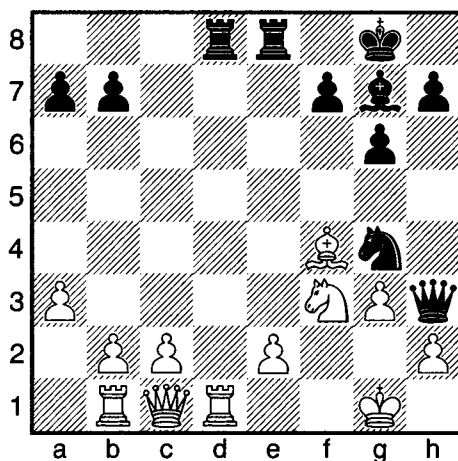
29-1 Better development and aggressive attack in the center give an advantage to Black. However, you only get 1 point if you think that Black is just better . In fact, he has a winning trick and 5 points are awarded for choice <A>.

29-2 With a minimal effort Black won a minor piece by force after **1...♠d3 2.♙×d3** (same after 2.♞×d3) **♜e4**. White got only minimal compensation, and resigned some 16 moves later! Other 1st moves for Black are reasonable, but don't earn you any points.

Interestingly, this position is identical to the one that occurred 56 years earlier in the game between George Thomas (White) and Frank Marshall (London, 1927). Black won a piece in similar manner and White only lasted 15 moves.

Study the common traps in the Openings you play.

Question #30



Black to Move!

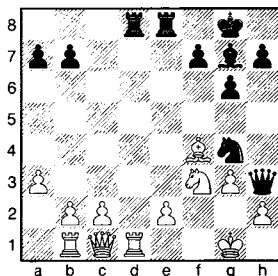
30 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Better

30 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♘g4×h2
B	1...♙g7-d4+
C	1...♞e8×e2
D	1...♞d8×d1

(30) Pomar Salamanca,A – Tal,M Las Palmas, 1975



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	65%	75%	86%	92%	92%	100%
B	1	12%	25%	14%	8%	8%	
C		18%					
D	-1	5%					

2 A	5	26%	15%	8%	25%	45%	88%
B	1	28%	29%	64%	75%	55%	12%
C		18%	44%	21%			
D		28%	12%	7%			

30-1 For the ♖, Black has a very promising position. All his pieces are in the “ready” mode - prepared to strike. Additionally, White pieces are lacking coordination and White ♔ is too exposed. Black has a tactical way to convert these positional advantages and is winning (5 points for <A>).

30-2 With White ♔ being the target, Black is aiming at the weakest link in the “defensive line” – the ♖h2. Yet the direct invasion of the 2d rank **1...♙xe2?** fails after **2.♙xe8+ ♕f8 3.♙f1** defending the “soft” spot - g2. Yet, this idea shouldn’t be abandoned. In fact, Black is ready to give up the ♙, but ... only after he gives up the ♖. After the initial **1...♖xh2!** (5 points for <A>) **2. ♖xh2** (Interesting is **2.♖g5**, but after **2...♙h5** Black is much better - Foygel) **♙xe2! 3. ♙xd8+ ♕f8** the threats **4...♙xh2** and **4...♙g2** can’t be stopped at the same time. In the game, White played **2. ♙xd8** (instead of **2.♖xh2**). After **2...♖xf3+ 3.♖xf3 ♙xd8 4.♖c3 ♕h6!** Black gained a big advantage and won 10 moves later.

A good try is **1...♕d4!?** (1 point for), but White can give up the *exchange* and get decent drawing chances. For example - **2.♙xd4 ♙xd4 3.♙f1** and, after ♙s are traded, Black still needs to find a winning plan.

After **1...♙xd1+ (<D>) 2.♙d1** White ♙ gets closer to the ♔-side where her presence would be very helpful. There is nothing better than a Draw after **2...♕d4+? 3.♙xd4 ♙xe2 4.♙d8+ ♕g7 5.♙d4+ ♕g8** (**5...♖f6? 6.♖e1!** and Black is in trouble!) **6.♙d8+** etc... (Foygel)

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

Interim Report: Questions 21 - 30

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

Table 1-3 Score to Rating Conversion

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	812	55	1775
10	825	60	1921
15	858	65	1997
20	900	70	2062
25	933	75	2196
30	991	80	2356
35	1107	85	2392
40	1256	90	2409
45	1422	95	2468
50	1576	100	2500

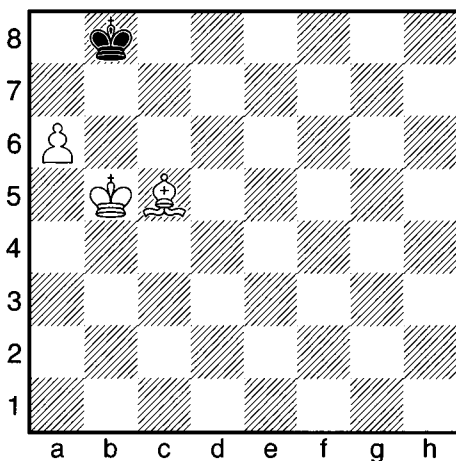
Table 2-3 Score to 50th Percentile Conversion

Rating Group	Score
Overall	56
2400+	95
2200-2400	77
1800-2200	58
1400-1800	55
1000-1400	47
Unrated-1000	23

Let's Take a Break:

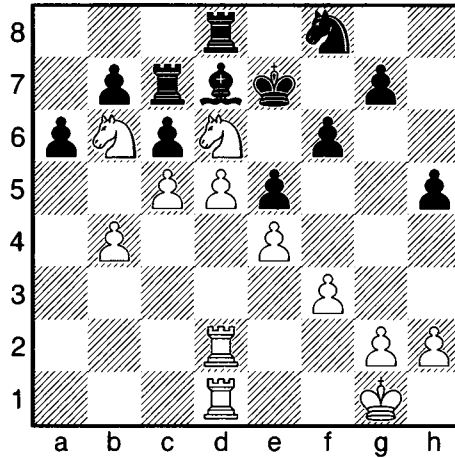


Q: We have already discussed the following position earlier in the test (Question #4). However, I would like to check your memory. Would you bet against someone who claims that White can promote the ♖ into the ♔ here?



A: If you wanted to bet, then, depending on the size of your bet, you may need to hire a lawyer to argue your case. White certainly CAN promote his ♖ and does so with minimal efforts. After 1. ♖a7 ♖a8 2. ♖a5 ♖b7 3. ♖a8 ♖+! the ♖ is on the board and I rest my case. Now let's hear from your lawyer.

Question #31



White to Move!

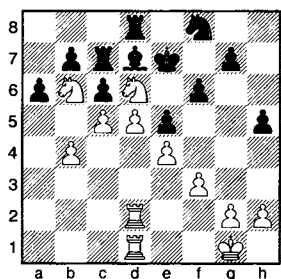
31 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

31 - II What is the best move?

A	1. $\Delta d5 \times c6$
B	1. $\text{K}g1-f2$
C	1. $\text{N}d6-b5$
D	1. $\text{N}d6-f5+$

(31) Romanovsky,P - Smorodsky,A Moscow, 1924



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	64%	73%	86%	92%	100%	100%
B		31%	19%	14%	8%		
C		5%	8%				
D	-1						

2 A		25%	25%	21%	9%		
B		18%	12%				
C	5	12%	45%	43%	58%	64%	82%
D	1	45%	18%	36%	33%	36%	18%

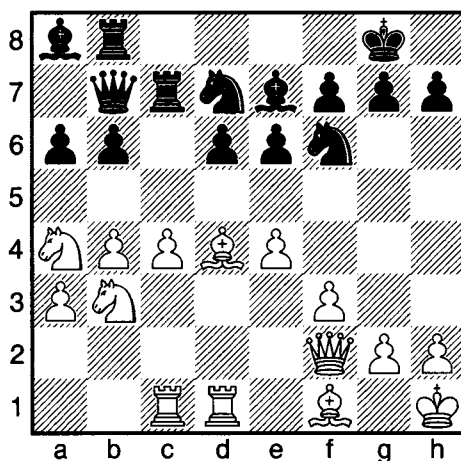
31-1 White's position is by far the superior one thanks to the strong center and excellent placement of pieces. Black has trouble finding decent moves, thus choice <D> is seriously wrong and would cost you 1 point. Moreover, White can win material at once, without giving up his positional pluses. White is winning - 5 points for <A>.

31-2 White has several lucrative options, but you have to be precise when selecting your move. The calm 1.♘f2 () is wrong because White doesn't really need his ♘'s participation at the moment. Also, White shouldn't release tension in center and thus 1.♙xc6 (<A>), which frees up a nice e6-d4 route for Black ♜, is wrong as well.

Two remaining moves are somewhat similar. White wins the *exchange* after either 1.♜f5+ or 1.♜b5! More forcing (due to check) 1.♜f5+ (1 point for <D>) is actually less accurate. After 1...♝f7! White must close the d-file via 2.♙d6 in order to win the *exchange*. After 2...♞cc8 3.♜xc8, White will have difficulties converting his advantage. With d-file locked, White ♞s won't be able to penetrate. Also Black pieces will get more space and some nice squares ♟e6-c4-b5, ♞e6-d4.

After 1.♜b5! (5 points for <C>) White doesn't need to play ♙d6, unless Black gives up a "ton" (like in case of 1...♙a5 2.♙d6+ ♝e8 3.♙xc7 and Black is lost). After 1...♞cc8 2.♜xc8+ Black's position is a mess. White has material advantage, keeps Black's minor pieces at bay and controls the future of the d-file!

Question #32



White to Move!

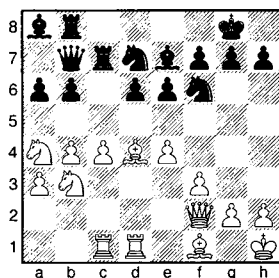
32 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

32 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♔f1-d3
B	1. ♖g2-g4
C	1. ♘a4×b6
D	1. ♙d4×f6

(32) Anand,V - Illescas Cordoba,M Linares, 1992



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	17%	7%	14%	42%	61%	87%
B	1	53%	60%	57%	50%	39%	13%
C		17%	25%	29%	8%		
D	-1	13%	8%				

2 A	1	29%	57%	21%	18%	42%	9%
B		18%	18%	29%	23%		6%
C	5	10%	17%	43%	47%	58%	85%
D		43%	8%	7%	12%		

32-1 White has a significant advantage in space; his pieces are placed very aggressively aiming at the ♔-side. Black pieces are passively cramped on the last three ranks. However, the conclusion that *White is Better* (1 point for) is an understatement. To earn full 5 points, you need to find the same winning combination that White played in the game. Black has no advantages and thus can't be better (-1 point for <D>).

32-2 The solid 1.♔d3 (1 point for <A>) allows White to continue his positional buildup.

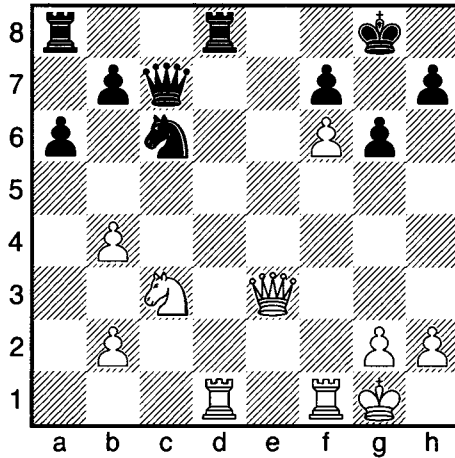
Aggressive ♔-side expansion via 1.♖g4?! () is suspicious since a majority of White's "cannons" is aiming at the ♔-side. After 1...♗e5 2.♔e3 ♖xg4!? the outcome is not clear.

The slightly damaged ♗ structure around Black ♔ is not a sufficient reason to give up the ♔ after 1.♔xg6 (<D>) ♗xg6.

The most decisive is a "blow" right at the best defended point in Black position – the ♗b6. Anand played 1.♖xg6! (5 points for <C>) ♖xg6 2.♖a5 ♔a7 3.♗c5 and Black couldn't solve the problems on the a7-g1 diagonal without losing his "shirt". The game ended rather quickly - 3...♗c5 4.♗xc5 ♖c8 5.♗c6 ♔b6 6.♔b1 ♖xg1 7.♖xg1 and Black resigned.

Don't underestimate advantage in space.

Question #33



Black to Move!

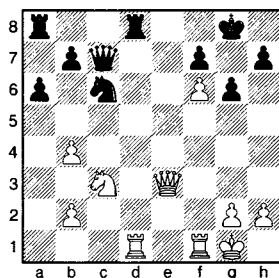
33 - I After 1...♞c6×b4 ...

A	White Wins
B	White gets GOOD compensation for the ♜
C	White gets NO compensation for the ♜
D	Black Wins

33 - II After 1...♞d8×d1 2.♞f1×d1 ♞c6×b4 ...

A	White Wins
B	White gets GOOD compensation for the ♜
C	White gets NO compensation for the ♜
D	Black Wins

(33) long - Rogman, (analysis) 1937



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	82%	75%	82%	79%	100%	100%
B		12%	25%	18%	13%		
C					8%		
D	-1	6%					

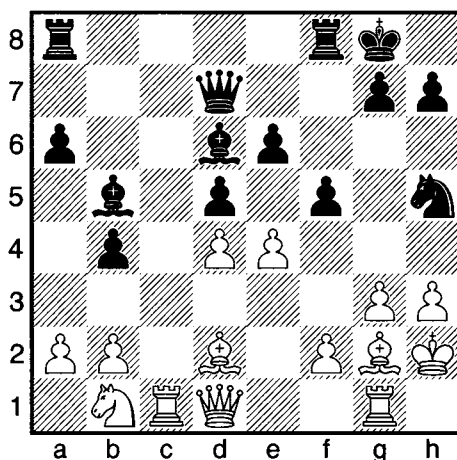
2 A	5	47%	50%	55%	57%	87%	93%
B	1	22%	25%	32%	28%	8%	7%
C		22%	19%	13%	15%	5%	
D	-1	9%	6%				

33-1 1...♖×b4 *almost* works, but Black can't get away with the murder. If you thought that White wins instantly after 2.♗h6 then you missed Black's defensive idea - 2...♜c5+ and 3...♜f8 defending the square g7 just in time. If that is the case, you only deserve 2 points instead of 5, even if you selected <A>. To get full credit – 5 points, you must have seen the above defense and also found the shocking 3.♜d4!! – blocking the check and attacking the ♖ on b4. The threat of *checkmate* (after ♜g7#) leaves Black with two dreadful options. Taking the ♜ with check 3...♜×d4+ and, after 4.♙h1, Black ♜ can't get back to f8 in time to stop the *checkmate*. Also not sufficient is retreating via 3...♜f8, as White wins a piece after 4.♜×f8+ and 5.♜×b4.

A “minor” in-between move (3.♜d4!!) changed the outcome of this line in a major way!

33-2 Trading the ♜s is a good idea for Black. However, the ♙ on b4 remains “poisoned” even after 1...♜×d1 2.♜×d1. After 2...♖×b4? 3.♜d4 White attacks the ♖, while maintaining the threat of ♜e3-h6. Black's hopes are with 3...♜b6 (3...♜c5? 4.♜d8+! and 5.♜×c5;). However, after 4.♖a4! Black ♜, already way *overloaded* with defensive tasks, has no good place to go. After 4...♜a7 (other moves allow either 5.♜h6 or 5.♜×b4) White has a pretty finish – 5.♜d8+!

Question #34



Black to Move!

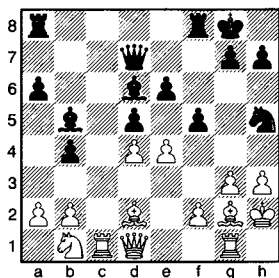
34 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Black is Better
D	Black is winning

34 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖f5×e4
B	1...♘h5×g3
C	1...♗g7-g6
D	1...♗f5-f4

(34) Saemisch,F - Nimzowitsch,A Copenhagen, 1923

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	-1	7%	5%	7%			
B		55%	33%	14%			
C	1	10%	37%	64%	58%	44%	9%
D	5	28%	25%	15%	42%	56%	91%

2 A	5	25%	47%	41%	72%	70%	88%
B	1	12%	28%	45%	15%	21%	12%
C		38%	13%	14%	13%	9%	
D	-1	25%	12%				

34-1 White is just one move away from neutralizing Black's pressure on the ♖-side. Black ♘ is under attack and defending it would give White the time to push the ♙ to e5 followed by ♙f2–f4 securing the ♖-side. Unfortunately for White, Black can choose to sacrifice the ♘ and to start a virtually unstoppable attack. *Black is winning* - 5 points for <D>. You get 1 point for choosing *Black is better* (<C>). Claiming that *White is winning* (<A>) is penalized.

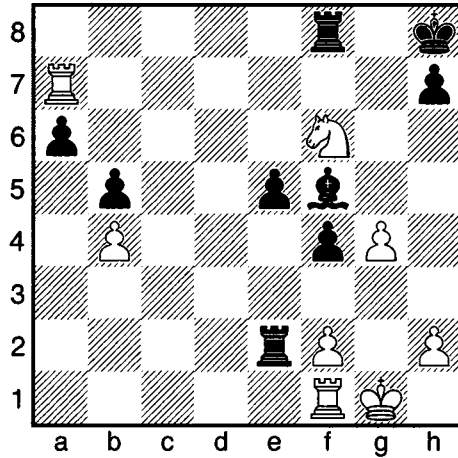
34-2 The ♘h5 is under attack and, as mentioned in 34-1, 1...♙g6 (<C>) is a passive way to react to this threat. White can choose between the solid 2.♙e5 ♙e7 3.♙f4 or the aggressive 2.♙xd5. Credit is given only for sacrificing the ♘. But not for 1...♙f4? (-1 point for <D>) as it doesn't eliminate the defensive resource - White e-♙.

Much better is 1...♙fxe4! (5 points for <A>), which was played in the game. Following 2.♙xh5 ♙xf2 Black got two ♙s for the ♘. In addition to material compensation, Black pieces were well-coordinated in attacking the easy targets - White ♖, weak ♙s and anemic pieces. After 3.♙g5 ♙8f8 4.♙h1 ♙8f5 5.♙e3 ♙d3 6.♙ce1 ♙h6 White resigned. He is virtually in *zugzwang*.

Interesting is 1...♘g3 (1 point for) 2.♙xg3 ♙fxe4 with similar attacking position as after 1...♙fxe4. Yet, Black ♙ is less aggressive and White ♙ is better placed for defensive tasks.

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

Question #35



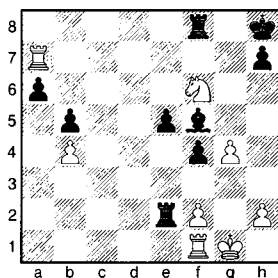
White to Move!

35 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Winning

35 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖g4×f5
B	1. ♜f1–d1
C	1. ♜a7×a6
D	1. ♞f6–d7

(35) Anand,V - Kamsky,G *New Delhi, 1990*

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		11%		7%			
B		9%	7%	8%			
C		25%	45%	14%	8%		
D	5	55%	48%	71%	92%	100%	100%

2 A		25%	16%	15%	8%		
B	5	54%	50%	71%	92%	100%	100%
C		21%	20%	14%			
D			14%				

35-1 Black has an extra ♖, but that should hardly be the focus of this very dynamic *Endgame*. The terrible position of Black ♔ becomes a decisive factor here. White can immediately generate a deadly threat! *White is winning* (5 points for <D>).

35-2 Only the move **1.♖d1!** (5 points for) allows White to maintain an attack against the pathetic Black ♔.

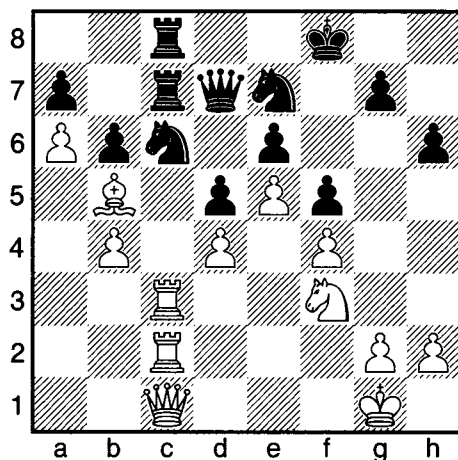
Consider these points:

- White ♖ captures the open d-file and gets ready to penetrate to d7,
- White ♘ on f6 is untouchable because Black ♖ must guard 8th rank,
- Black ♙ on f5, which is guarding the critical squares d7 and h7, is under attack.

Black lasted only 3 moves since he couldn't save the ♙. After **1...♙g6** (1...♙e4 2.♙f3) **2.♖dd7 ♖e1+ 3.♙g2 ♙f3+ 4.♙h3** the *checkmate* can't be stopped and Black resigned.

The ♖ belongs on the open file where it should attempt to penetrate to the 7th and 8th ranks.

Question #36



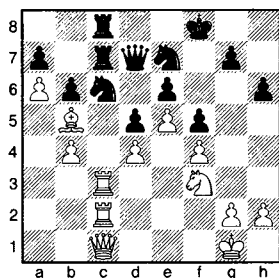
White to Move!

36 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

36 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖b5-a4
B	1. ♖b5xc6
C	1. ♘f3-h4
D	1. ♔g1-f2

(36) Alekhine, A - Nimzowitsch, A *San Remo, 1930*White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	52%	75%	93%	100%	100%	100%
B		48%	25%	7%			
C							
D	-1						

2 A	5	27%	60%	83%	89%	100%	100%
B	-1	35%	18%				
C		23%	22%	10%			
D		15%		7%	11%		

36-1 Black must have felt awful in this position as he is completely tied up. It is ironic that with all but two of his pieces still in the game, Black can only move the ♔. This is due to the *pins* on the c-file and the a4-e8 diagonal neither of which can be resolved. *White is winning* - 5 points for <A>. You get 1 point penalty if you thought Black is better (<D>).

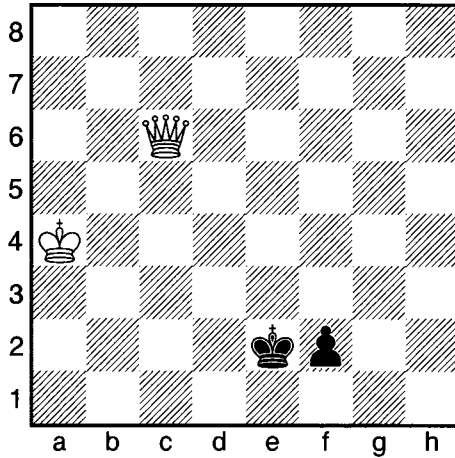
36-2 All of Black's problems are due to the *pins*. Unpinning after 1.♙xc6? (-1 point for) is a major mistake as it immediately allows Black to get back in the game.

1. ♖f2 (<D>) is fancy, but useless, since White ♔ can't help with the board full of pieces.

Not much of a threat is 1.♘h4 (<C>) ♕f7 etc...

The decisive move is 1.♙a4! (5 points for <A>) and White is ready to bring yet another attacker – the b-♗, reaping full benefits of the *pin*. Black resigned – he was losing the ♘ on c6, since nothing could stop 2.♗b5.

Question #37



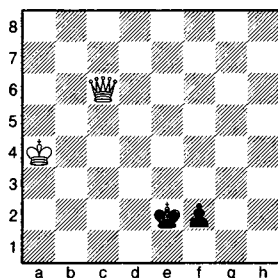
White to Move!

37 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	White is Winning
B	Draw
C	If the ♔f2 was on d2 instead, White would win
D	Both B and C correct

37 - II What is the move White must play?

A	1. ♖c6-c4+
B	1. ♖c6-e4+
C	1. ♖c6-g2
D	No significant difference

(37) Training Position: ♔ vs. ♖ + ♗ on 7th

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		58%	48%	27%	8%		
B	1	14%	22%	30%	25%		
C	1		5%				
D	5	28%	25%	43%	67%	100%	100%

2 A		12%					
B			25%	21%			
C					17%		
D	5	88%	75%	79%	83%	100%	100%

37-1 This is a theoretical *Endgame* ♔ vs. ♖ + ♗ on 7th. There are few easy ideas to remember:

- the ♔ cannot win the ♗ without the help of his ♖,
- the ♔ tries to force the defending ♖ to block the ♗, thus gaining valuable time to bring his own ♖ closer to the target,
- this process is repeated as many times as necessary until the ♖ joins the ♔ and together they can outmuscle opponent's ♖ and win the ♗.

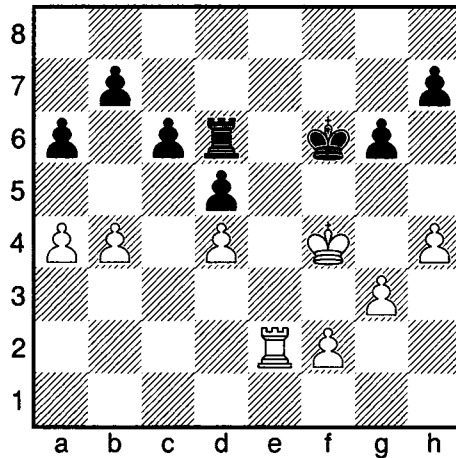
There are few exceptions when the above plan doesn't work. When the ♗ is on the ♖ file (a and h) or the ♗ file (c and f) the ♖ can't be forced in front of the ♗ because of the *stalemate* idea.

The bottom line - the starting position is a Draw (1 point for). If White ♗ were on d2 instead of f2, then White wins (1 point for <C>). Since both and <C> are correct, you get 5 points for selecting <D>.

37-2 White can't win no matter what he plays because Black has the ♗ on the ♗ file and can utilize the defensive idea based on a *stalemate*. For example after 1. ♔e4+ ♖d2 2. ♔f3 ♖e1 3. ♔e3+ ♖f1 it looks like White succeeded. Yet, this is the only time when Black ♖ is blocking his ♗. After 4. ♖b3 ♖g1 5. ♔g3+, Black ♖ bravely goes to the "safe" corner 5... ♖h1! Now White cannot make any progress with his ♖ because of the threat 6... ♗f1♔, while 6. ♔xf2 leads to a *stalemate*.

Learn more about the ♔ vs. ♗ Endgames from any of the recommended basic Endgame books

Question #38



Black to Move!

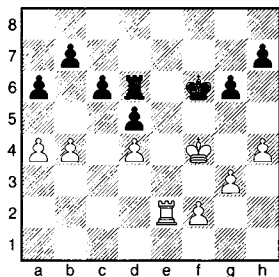
38 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Slightly Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Slightly Better

38 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♗b7-b5
B	1...♞d6-e6
C	1...♞d6-d7
D	1...♞d6-d8

(38) Pozharsky, V



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		18%	5%	7%			
B	5	38%	42%	36%	44%	69%	88%
C	1	25%	28%	50%	48%	31%	12%
D		19%	25%	7%	8%		

2 A		10%	28%	29%	15%	5%	
B		47%	38%	14%	25%	14%	
C	1	21%	12%	9%	8%	19%	
D	5	22%	22%	48%	52%	62%	100%

38-1 White ♖ controls the only open file - “e”. A slightly more robust ♗ structure favors him as well. It is easier for White to start advancing his ♗-side ♗ majority, than for Black to advance his ♗-side ♗ majority. Finally, exchanging the ♖s would also benefit White, as we shall see in 38-2. While *Draw* is a possible outcome, it is Black, who needs to overcome the difficulties. *White is better* (5 points for).

38-2 Black must defend cautiously. Counterproductive is 1...♗b5? (<A>) since, after 2.♗a5, Black ♗s on the ♗-side are permanently “frozen” and the ♗a6 is a defensive liability.

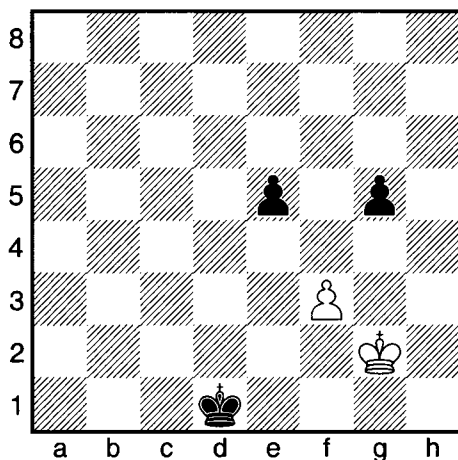
Even worse is trading ♖s - 1...♖e6? () 2.♖xe6 ♗xe6 and, after 3.♗a5, White can capitalize on his extra ♗ on ♗-side while Black’s ♗-side ♗s are going nowhere. The White’s winning plan would be:

- Advancing the ♗s on the ♗-side,
- Creating a passed ♗ there and forcing Black ♗ to focus on it,
- Transferring the ♗ to the ♗-side to pick up the defenseless Black ♗s.

The two remaining ♖ moves are both reasonable options. 1...♖d7 (1 point for <C>) is Ok, but I prefer 1...♖d8 (5 points for <D>). In addition to preserving the status quo, Black ♖ keeps White ♖ from penetrating via ♖e8. After 2.♗a5 White will be planning a cautious ♗ advance on the ♗-side, while keeping an eye on Black’s intentions on the ♗-side.

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

Question #39



White to Move!

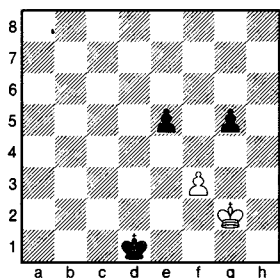
39 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Draw
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

39 - II What is the best move?

A	1.♔g2-f1
B	1.♔g2-h1
C	1.♔g2-g3
D	1.♔g2-f2

(39) Neushtadt, H 1897



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		45%	50%	21%			
B	5	55%	50%	79%	100%	100%	100%
C	-1						
D	-1						

2 A		51%	25%	29%	9%	8%	
B	5	26%	25%	64%	85%	80%	100%
C		12%	33%	7%	6%	12%	
D		11%	17%				

39-1 Black is ahead in material and White is struggling to get a Draw (-1 point for either <C> or <D>). By playing a few precise moves, White can defend successfully. You get 5 points for choice .

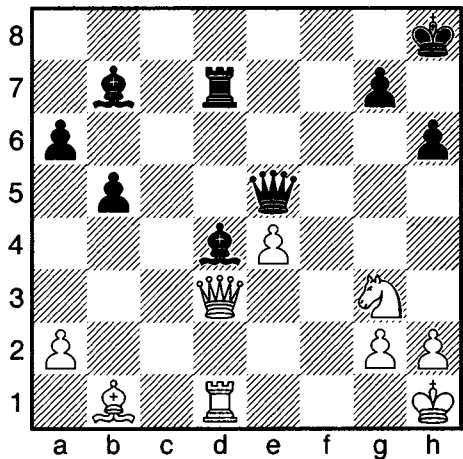
39-2 You must understand the principle of *opposition* in order to play ♖ Endgames successfully. This is one of the more complex examples and it deals with both the *regular* and the *distant oppositions*. Black is trying to force White ♗ away from the ♖ on f3. He will gladly give up one of his ♖s to win the ♖f3. To keep his grounds White ♗ must control the *opposition*. After 1. ♗h1!! (5 points for) White gains a *distant opposition* that he can maintain by moving between h1, h2 and h3 while Black ♗ is on d-file. Once Black ♗ steps onto the e-file, White ♗ will be able to step forward and face him. For example – 1... ♗d2 2. ♗h2! ♗d3 3. ♗h3! ♗e2 4. ♗g2 ♗e3 5. ♗g3 ♗d2 6. ♗h2! White holds.

Not to be missed is a tactical idea of ♖g5–g4; by sacrificing the g-♖, Black gets the e-♖ running freely. In reality, it never works. When White ♗ is on h2, White can simply take on g4 and promote his ♖ just in time. When White is ♗ on h1 (after 1. ♗h1 ♖g4), White plays 2. ♗g2, threatening to take on g4 and once again securing a Draw.

All other moves lose. Here is the sample line -1. ♗f1!? (*opposition*?! Not for long!) ♗d2 2. ♗f2 ♗d3 (White ♖f3 is in a way!) 3. ♗g2 (3. ♗f1 ♗e3) ♗e2 4. ♗g3 ♗f1 5. ♗g4 ♗f2 6. ♗xg5 ♗f3 and Black wins.

Study the above-mentioned variations in greater detail.

Question #40



White to Move!

40 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Winning

40 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖g3-f5
B	1. ♖g3-e2
C	1. ♔d3-f3
D	Both A and B are equally good for White.

(40) Von Popiel,I – Marko,G Monte Carlo, 1902

8									
7									
6									
5									
4									
3									
2									
1									
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	57%	51%	27%	25%	15%	
	B	25%	24%	43%		8%	12%
	C	5	18%	25%	30%	75%	88%
	D						

2	A	32%	20%	36%	14%		
	B	29%	21%	7%	11%		
	C	5	15%	47%	57%	65%	79%
	D	-1	24%	12%		10%	21%

40-1 Evaluating this vibrant position is not an easy task. Both sides have some positional pluses and minuses. Also, the critical *pin* on the d-file introduces various tactical opportunities. However, not counting tactical slip-ups, the position is dynamically equal and choice <C> earns you 5 points.

40-2 While the *pin* is a well-known tactical operation, players often forget that the *pinned* piece can **always** move when it is not protecting the ♔.

In this example, attempts to win the *pinned* ♙ by playing either 1.♘f5? (<A>) or 1.♘e2? () actually result in White losing his ♙. After a sudden counterstrike 1...♙g1!!, the threat of *checkmate* on h2 is more than sufficient to leave the ♖ on d7 hanging. Missing this idea entirely and selecting <D> is penalized (-1 point). This leaves White with an accurate 1.♙f3 (5 points for <C>) and the battle continues.

Ironically, in the game White played the erroneous 1.♘f5?, and Black missed the tactical opportunity. Instead of winning the ♙ after 1...♙g1!, Black chose to resign, thinking that he was losing the ♙.

Interim Report: Questions 31 - 40

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

Table 1-4 Score to Rating Conversion

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	809	55	1494
10	818	60	1664
15	841	65	1816
20	883	70	1953
25	940	75	2048
30	987	80	2126
35	1092	85	2203
40	1196	90	2332
45	1298	95	2441
50	1385	100	2500

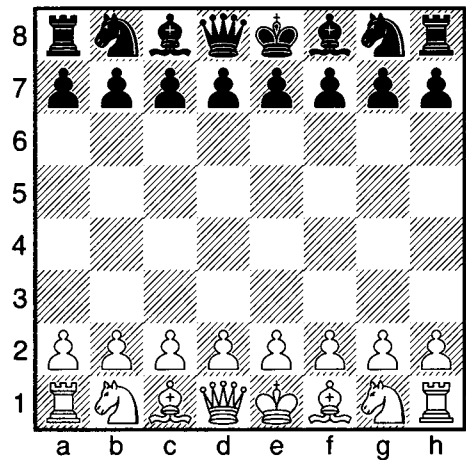
Table 2-4 Score to 50th Percentile Conversion

Rating Group	Score
Overall	67
2400+	96
2200-2400	89
1800-2200	76
1400-1800	64
1000-1400	56
Unrated-1000	42

Let’s Take a Break:

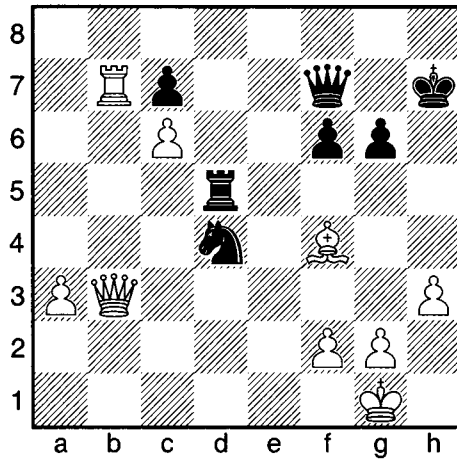


Q: What is the fastest way White can *checkmate* an opponent who is consistent in “mirroring” his every move (i.e. 1.♖e4 ♖e5 2..♙a6 ♙a3 3.♖b4 ♖b5 etc...)?



A: Do not try this at the tournament! White only needs 4 moves to finish the game. 1.♖d4 ♖d5 2.♙d3! ♙d6 3.♙h3!! ♙h6 4.♙c8#.

Question #41



White to Move!

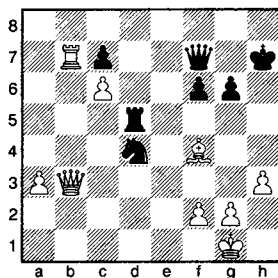
41 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

41 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖b3-c3
B	1. ♖b3-c4
C	1. ♖b3-e3
D	1. ♜b7×c7

(41) Morozevich, A - Polgar, Ju. Frankfurt, 1999



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	42%	50%	64%	83%	80%	100%
B		28%	34%	29%	9%	20%	
C		22%			8%		
D	-1	8%	16%	7%			

2 A	-2	8%	15%				
B		17%	25%	36%	31%	13%	11%
C	5	23%	22%	14%	38%	75%	81%
D	1	52%	38%	50%	31%	12%	8%

41-1 In addition to having an extra ♖, White has a better protected ♔ and aggressively placed pieces. White's position is overwhelming, and all he needs is a little accuracy in order not to blunder anything major. The best choice is *White is winning* (5 points for <A>).

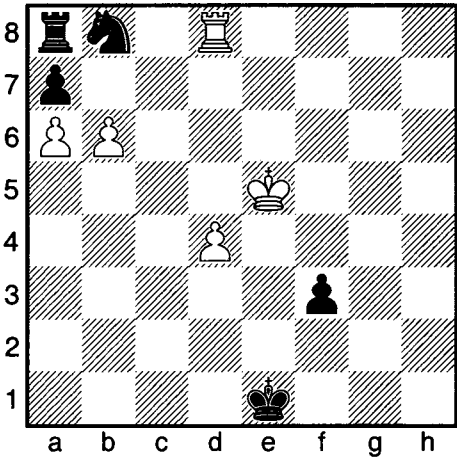
41-2 Blunders are extremely rare in the games of the elite grandmasters. In this position (from a game between two superstars rated 2700+) White picked one of the bad alternatives. Besides the direct threat ♖×b3 White had to detect two additional tactical motifs – possible ♖ forks (like ♖e2+) and *discovered attacks* due to standoff between the ♗s.

Do not miss the *fork* after 1. ♗c3?? (-2 points for <A>) ♖e2+. **Morozevich** played 1. ♗c4? () avoiding the *fork*, but not the *discovered attack*. **Polgar** responded 1... ♖f3+! (clearing the path for Black ♖) and after 2. ♖×f3 ♖d1+! 3. ♗f1 (what else?) ♖×f1+ 4. ♖×f1, came the final punch 4... ♗c4+! winning the ♖f4 and leaving White without sufficient compensation for the ♗.

Interesting is 1. ♖×c7!? (1 point for <D>), but after 1... ♗×c7 2. ♗×d5 it is not clear that White is winning in either of the two resulting endgames – ♖ vs. ♖ or ♗+♖ vs. ♗+♖s. For example 2... ♖e2+ 3. ♖f1 ♖×f4 4. ♗d7+ ♗×d7 5. ♖×d7 ♖e6 6. ♖h4 etc... or 2... ♗×f4 3. ♗f7+ ♖h6 4. ♗f8+ ♖h7 5. ♗e7+ ♖h6 6. ♗c5 etc... The outcome is uncertain in either case and requires further analysis. *Practice with a friend or computer.*

Accurate 1. ♗e3 (5 points for <C>) leaves Black with only minimal chances to survive!

Question #42



White to Move!

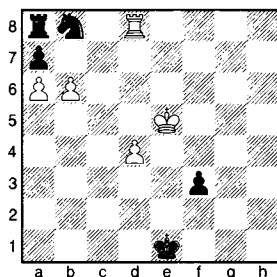
42 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Draw
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

42 - II Choose the best line

A	1. ♖b6-b7
B	1. ♖b6xa7
C	1. ♕e5-e4 ♜f3-f2 2. ♜d8-f8
D	1. ♕e5-e4 ♜f3-f2 2. ♖b6-b7

(42) Somov-Nasimovich,E 1938



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	1	32%	22%	17%	28%	30%	17%
B	5	19%	28%	39%	48%	64%	83%
C		28%	11%	21%	7%		
D		21%	39%	23%	17%	6%	

2 A	-1	26%	18%	21%	8%		
B	-1	22%	23%	7%	17%	13%	
C		35%	26%	29%	25%	38%	14%
D	5	17%	33%	43%	50%	49%	86%

42-1 This very tactical *Endgame* is a *study*. Due to the threat 1...♘c6+ and a few other tricks, it looks like White ♙s can be neutralized, while Black ♜f3 will be successful in its journey. However, White has a miracle escape - 5 points for and only 1 point for <A>.

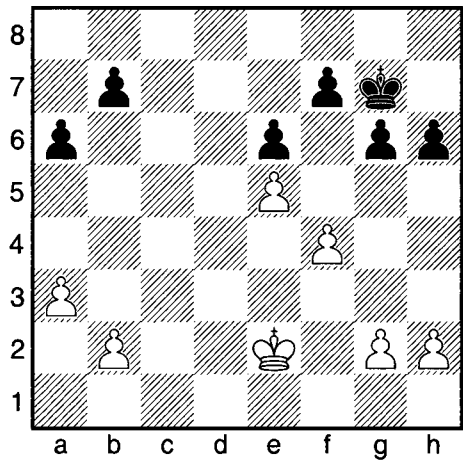
42-2 One of the immediate Black's threats is the *discovered attack* ♘c6+ followed by ♙xd8. Neither <A> nor address this threat and are penalized.

After 1.♙e4 ♜f2 2.♞f8? (<C>) Black can eliminate all White's counter-chances after 2...♜xb6 and next win the ♞ after 3...♜f1♞.

The final option - 1.♙e4 ♜f2 2.♜b7 (<D>) seems OK until you see that after 2...♜f1♞ 3.♜xa8♞ Black has a *skewer* 3...♞h1+! winning White ♞. But... wait; after the calm 4.♙e3! ♞xa8 White has another quiet move 5.♜d5! And now, all of a sudden, Black can't make any progress despite having enormous material advantage. Black pieces are trapped in the corner and Black ♜ is cut off by White ♜ - 6.♙d1 ♜d3 7.♜c1 ♜c3, etc. Draw!

If you selected <D> award yourself with 5 points only if you saw the entire variation. Those, who missed the *skewer* 3...♞h1+, or just guessed, get only 2 points.

Question #43



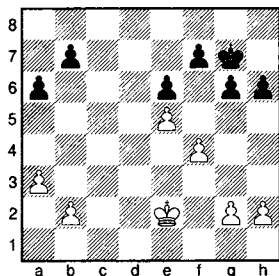
43 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Slightly Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Slightly Better
D	White is Winning

43 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖b7-b5
B	1...♗g6-g5
C	1...♗h6-h5
D	1...♔g7-f8

(43) Schlechter,C – Tartakower,S Carlsbad 1907



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		25%	25%	5%			
B	2	38%	28%	57%	57%	38%	22%
C	5	25%	24%	31%	35%	62%	78%
D		12%	23%	7%	8%		

2 A		7%	10%				
B		68%	50%	51%	41%	14%	7%
C			9%	15%	17%		
D	5	25%	31%	34%	42%	86%	93%

43-1 White has a slightly better position (5 points for <C>) because his ♖ is more active and is ready to attack the ♜-side ♘s via ♖e3–d4–c5–b6. However, Black has plenty of defensive resources and a Draw is a likely outcome with a careful play. You get 2 point if you thought the position is equal and selected .

43-2 With White ♖ ready to infiltrate Black's ♜-side, Black should consider the following *strategic* options: creating a disturbance on the ♖-side or bringing his ♖ to defend the ♜-side ♘s.

Fruitless is 1...♗h5 (<C>) as it doesn't create any tension on the ♖-side.

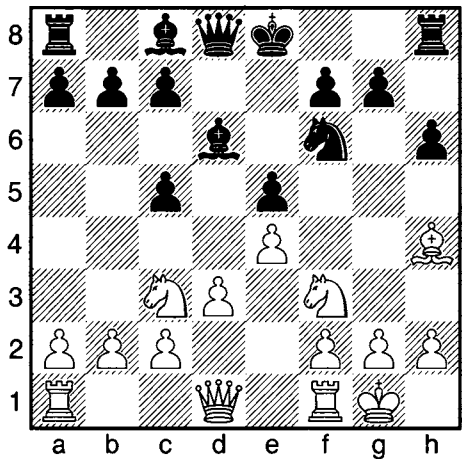
The active 1...♗g5 () looks attractive yet is erroneous. After 2.♙xg5 ♗xg5 White ♖ changes his plan 3.♕f3! ♗g6 4.♗g4. Suddenly White has a new plan – creating an *outside passed* ♙ on the ♖-side (via 5.♗g3 and 6.♗h4). Once Black ♖ is tied up with defending against this ♙, White ♖ will rush to pick other Black ♘s. I.e. 4...♗h6 5.♙f6 ♖xf6 5.♗g3 ♖e5 6.♗h4 ♙xh4 7.♙xh4 ♗g6 8.♗h5+ ♖f6 9.♗b4 ♖b5 10.♗h6 ♗g6 11.♗h7 ♖xh7 12.♖f5 etc...) 5.♗g3 ♗g6 6.♗h4 ♙xh4 7.♙xh4 ♗h6 8.♗h5 ♖h7 9.♗g5 ♗g7 10.♗h6+ ♖h7 11.♖f6 etc... Creating *outside passed* ♙ proves decisive.

Focusing on defending the ♜-side is a lot more promising for Black. But not 1...♗b5? (-1 point for <A>) allowing White ♖ to break in uncontested.

After precise 1...♖f8! (5 points for <D>) Black ♖ rushes to help his ♜-side ♘s and makes it just in time! After 2.♖d3 ♖e7 3.♖c4 ♖d7 4.♖c5 ♖c7 it is not clear if White could make any progress.

Practice the starting position with a friend or computer.

Question #44



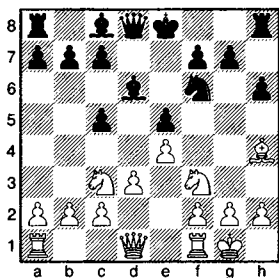
White to Move!

44 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Slightly Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Slightly Better
D	White is Winning

44 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖c3–d5
B	1. ♔d1–e2
C	1. ♙h4×f6
D	1. ♜h2–h3

(44) Training Position: OpeningWhite to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	2	12%	7%		25%	19%	32%
B	5	22%	25%	34%	43%	59%	68%
C		54%	68%	66%	32%	32%	
D	-1	12%					

2 A		75%	75%	64%	46%	9%	12%
B	5			8%	12%	48%	67%
C	1		25%	7%	33%	43%	21%
D		25%		21%	9%		

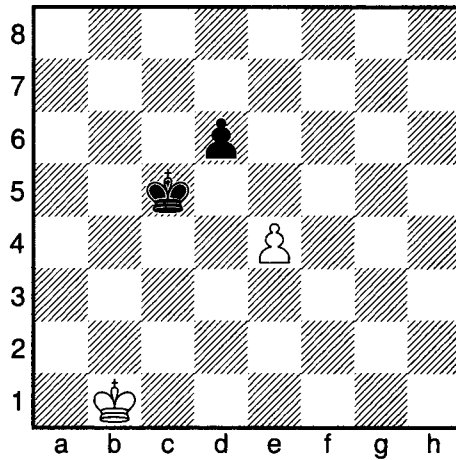
44-1 A good example of how detrimental a premature castle can be. I evaluate this position as Equal (5 points for), but White needs to be careful, as he isn't far from being slightly worse. You get 2 points if you selected <A>. Black's shortcomings - the "bad" ♘ on d6, double ♙s on c-file and a slight lack of development, are actually insignificant here. The ♘d6 is "cementing" Black's center. Double ♙s on the c-file are controlling the center and restricting White's ♘s. White's advantage in development is minimal and can easily become a disadvantage, because in similar positions an early ♖-side castle is often a mistake. Since Black still has the option of castling ♗-side, one of his ideas is an aggressive ♙g5. By utilizing poor positions of White ♖ and ♘, Black has a chance for a strong attack!

44-2 Once you recognize Black's idea of launching an attack via ♙g5, the move selection is not that difficult. Unnecessary is 1.♙h3 (<D>) as it only weakens White's ♖ side. Over-aggressive 1.♘d5 (<A>) leads to trouble after 1...♙g5 2.♘xf6 (2.♘xg5 ♘xd5 3.♘xf7 ♗xh4 and Black is in charge) ♗xf6 3.♙g3 ♙g4 and, after 4...♙xf3, White ♘ on g3 is "sentenced for life" to the ♖-side and can't participate in any future actions on the ♗-side.

While 1.♙xf6 (1 point for <C>) neutralizes Black's ♙g5, I think it is too early to give up the ♘.

After the modest 1.♗e2 (5 points for), White has a variety of options, including 2.♗e3 to address the *pin*. This position is dynamically equal and the future battle will be interesting.

Question #45



White to Move!

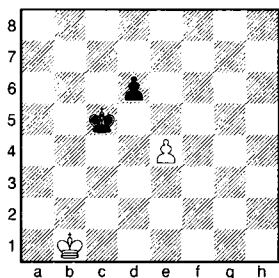
45 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Draw
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

45 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♔b1-c2
B	1. ♔b1-c1
C	1. ♔b1-b2
D	1. ♖e4-e5

(45) Training Position: ♖ Endgame

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		53%	25%	17%			
B	5	47%	75%	83%	100%	100%	100%
C	-1						
D	-2						

2 A		22%	20%				
B		18%	50%	14%	8%		
C	-1	28%	5%				
D	5	32%	25%	86%	92%	100%	100%

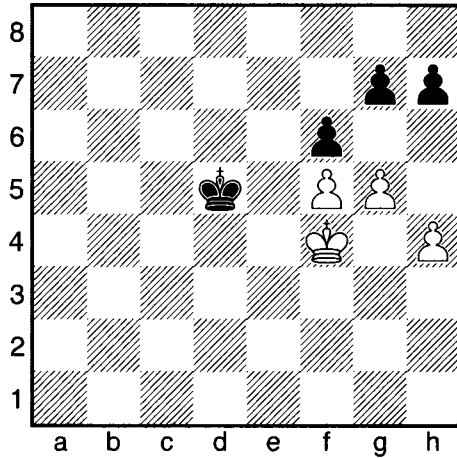
45-1 With Black ♖ dominating the battlefield, White is desperately trying to escape. The ♖ on e4 is doomed and you are penalized if you thought that White is winning (-1 point for <D>) or better (-1 point for <C>). While White can't save the ♖ on e4, he can save the game! 5 points for choosing *Draw* ().

45-2 The ♖ on e4 can't be defended, so White must look ahead and consider the situation after the ♖ is gone. The standard ♖ Endgame rules of *opposition* apply – in order to win Black must, after eliminating the ♖, be able to get his ♖ in front of his ♖ and avoid a scenario where White controls the *opposition*.

We now know the plans and are ready to look at specific moves. Pointless is 1.♖b2 (-1 point for <C>) as it doesn't bring White ♖ closer to the ♖s. After 1.♖c2 ♖d4 2. ♖d2 (2.♖e5 ♖xe5! and Black wins) ♖xe4 3.♖e2 ♖d4 4.♖d2 White has the *opposition*, but only temporarily. After 4...♖d5! we reach the critical position with White to move. He loses for example – 5.♖e2 ♖c3 6.♖d1 ♖d3 7.♖e1 ♖c2 8.♖e2 ♖d4 etc... Same thing would've happened after 1.♖c1, when the "extra" ♖ move helps Black to win the *opposition* and the game.

Therefore, the best choice is 1.♖e5!! (5 points for <D>), which is forcing Black ♖ to move! After the necessary 1...♖xe5 2.♖c1!! (2.♖c2? ♖c4 and Black wins) ♖d5 3.♖d1 ♖d4 4.♖d2 ♖e4 5.♖e2 White gets a Draw because Black doesn't have a ♖-move to regain the *opposition*.

Question #46



White to Move!

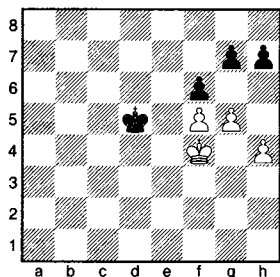
46 - I Respond to 1.♘h4-h5

A	1...♗f6×g5+
B	1...♗h7-h6
C	1...♖d5-d4
D	1...♖d5-c6

46 - II Other than 1.♗h4-h5, what would you do?

A	1. ♖f4-g4
B	1. ♖f4-e3
C	1. ♗g5-g6
D	1. ♗g5×f6

(46) Chigorin, M – Tarrash, S Ostende, 1905



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		10%	11%	14%			
B	5	62%	75%	86%	93%	100%	100%
C	-1	28%	14%		7%		
D	-2						

2 A	5	15%	15%	40%	69%	100%	100%
B	-1	18%	9%		5%		
C		40%	50%	29%	14%		
D	1	27%	26%	31%	12%		

46-1 Black is enjoying a big advantage here thanks to a very well placed ♖. White is hoping for a ♘ breakthrough and hence comes 1.♘h5. Taking lightly the threat of 2.♘h6 proves hazardous. After 1...♙c6?? (-2 points for <D>; where is the ♙ going?) or 1...♙d4? (-1 point for <C>) Black is losing. I.e. 1...♙d4? 2.♘h6! ♙xh6 (2...♙xg5+ 3.♙g3!) 3.♙xf6, etc... Also erroneous is 1...♙xg5+ (<A>) as after 2.♙xg5 ♙e5 3.♘h6!, A Draw is imminent.

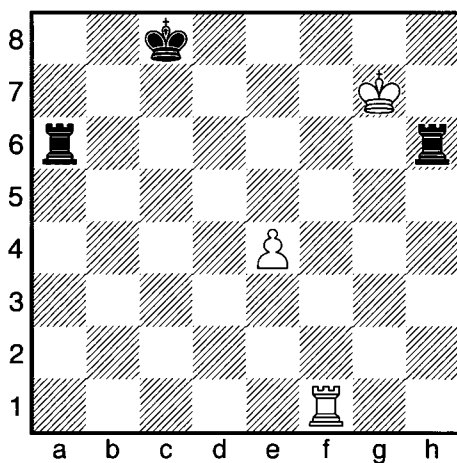
The accurate 1...♘h6! (5 points for) allows instantly to “freeze” White’s counter-play on the ♙-side. Subsequently, Black will easily win, by forcing White ♙ away from the ♘s. For example, 2.♙xh6 ♙xh6 3.♙f3 ♙e5 4.♙g4 ♙e4 5.♙g3 ♙xf5 6.♙f3 ♙g5 and Black is winning.

46-2 The first Russian grandmaster **Mikhail Chigorin** believed that White’s position was hopeless and resigned at once. After 1.♙g6? (<C>) Black wins easily 1...♘h5! 2.♙f3 ♙e5 etc... Also failing is an attempt to activate White ♙ after 1.♙xf6 (<D>) ♙xf6 2.♙g4 ♙e5 3.♙h5 since Black is faster 3...♙xf5 4.♙h6 ♙g4 5.♙xh7 ♙h5!! (5...♙xh4? 6.♙g6=, or 5...♙f5 6.♙g6 ♙f4 7.♘h5=) 6.♙g7 ♙f5, etc. Still you get 1 point for trying. Hopeless is 1.♙e3 (-1 point for), due to 1...♙e5 etc...

The resignation nevertheless was premature! White missed a *stalemate* idea after 1.♙g4! ♙e5 2.♙g6! ♘h6 (or 2...♘h5) 3.♙h5! and taking the ♘ on f5 leads to a *stalemate*. Otherwise, White ♙ shuttles between the squares g4 and h5. If you selected <A> because you saw the *stalemate* idea then you get 5 points, otherwise - only 2 points for a “lucky” guess.

Keep looking for defensive resources - it is never too late to resign!

Question #47



White to Move!

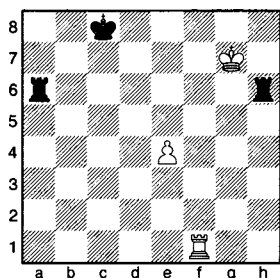
47 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Draw
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

47 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖e4-e5
B	1. ♜f1-c1+
C	1. ♜f1-e1
D	1. ♜f1-f8+

(47) Kozlovsky,S 1931



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	1	39%	33%	28%	19%		
B	5	51%	67%	72%	81%	100%	100%
C		5%					
D	-1	5%					

2 A		53%	30%	26%	11%		
B		7%	18%	7%	5%		
C	-1	18%	17%	11%	7%		
D	5	22%	35%	56%	77%	100%	100%

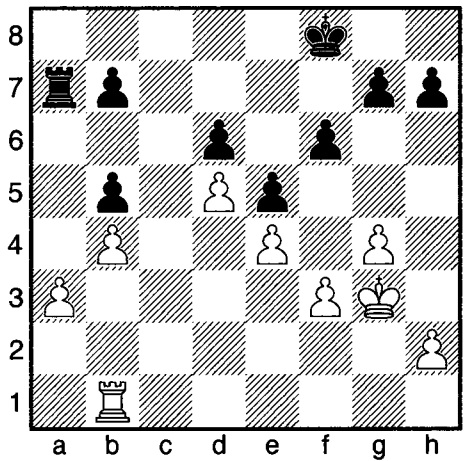
47-1 If you enjoy miraculous escapes, here is another one for you! In this hopeless position White utilizes terrible placement of all Black pieces and secures a Draw (5 points for)

47-2 First, let's establish the fact that, unless White finds some specific drawing idea, Black has sufficient means to win this game easily. All Black needs is the time to play ♖he6 or ♖h2 and he can easily coordinate his forces in attacking the ♙. After 1.♙e5 (<A>) ♜he6 or 1.♜c1+ () ♙d7 2.♜d1+ ♙e7 or 1.♜e1 (-1 point for <C>) ♜he6 White doesn't stand a chance.

In order to earn points here you have to recognize the idea of combining harassment of Black ♙ with the attack against the misplaced ♜s. After 1.♜f8+ (5 points for <D>) ♙d7 2.♜f7+ Black is suddenly facing difficulties hiding from the annoying checks. The only attempt is 2...♙e6 stepping on the 6th rank and temporarily breaking the "♜a6–♜h6" connection. Then what? White ♙ can't take the ♜h6 because White ♜ would be lost. However, after calm 3.♜f5! there is another interesting development – if the attacked ♜h6 leaves the 6th rank, White could play 4.♜f6+ and it is then the other Black ♜'s turn to start feeling the heat. The only way to maintain the defense of both Black ♜s is for Black ♙ to leave the 6th rank. But that means he has to go back to the 7th rank. After 3...♙e7 4.♜f7+ the checking starts again and White is able to Draw!

If you selected <D>, but didn't see 3.♜f5, you get only 2 points.

Question #48



White to Move!

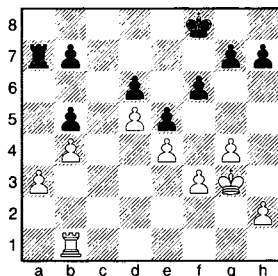
48 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Slightly Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Slightly Better
D	White is Significantly Better

48 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖b1–c1
B	1. ♖b1–a1
C	1. ♖b1–b3
D	1. ♗g4–g5

(48) Training Exercise: ♖ Endgame



White to Move!

Score		0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	20%	40%				
	B	38%	12%	7%			
	C	1	30%	40%	71%	67%	30%
	D	5	12%	8%	22%	33%	70%
							100%
2	A	5	22%	25%	51%	75%	88%
	B		26%	34%	11%		
	C		52%	25%	38%	25%	12%
	D	-2		16%			

48-1 The key elements of any ♖ endgame with multiple ♙s are -

- Passed ♙s,
- Control over the open file,
- Ability to penetrate with the ♖,
- Position of the ♙s.

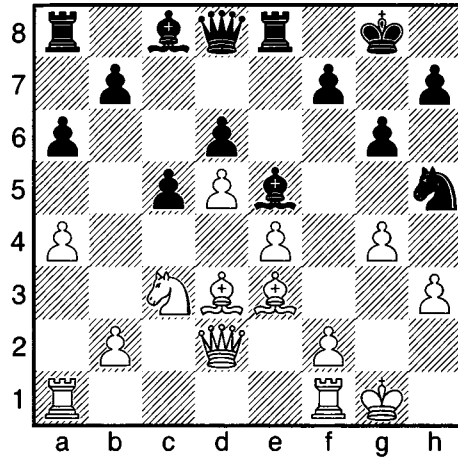
There are no passed ♙s in this position; White has an advantage in the remaining three elements and is dominating (5 points for <D>). If you thought that White only has a small advantage, you get 1 point.

48-2 Black is attacking the ♙ on a3, and you shouldn't ignore this threat entirely by playing 1.♙g5? (-2 points for <D>). Furthermore, you get no credit for doing completely the opposite - focusing too much on defending the ♙a3 (or <C>). In addition to threatening the ♙, Black wants to play ♜f8-e7-d7 effectively closing the door to the 7th rank. If that should happen, White would lose two of the key advantages, as listed in 48-1. It would then only be a matter of time before White would lose the control over the open c-file. Black could do that by playing ♜a7-a8-c8 or ♜a7-a6-c6.

White must hurry and 1.♜c1! (5 points for <A>) is the move to play. White not only maintains his advantage, but also significantly expands it. After, 1...♜a3 2.♜c8+ ♜f7 3.♜c7+ and 4.♜b7 and 5.♜b5 White has a "healthy" extra ♙. Not better are 1...♙b6 2.♜c6, or 1...♜f7 2.♜c7+ and 3.♜d7, or 1...♙g5 2.♜c7 ♙h6 3.♜d7

Always seek activity for your ♜s, even if it costs you a ♙ or two.

Question #49



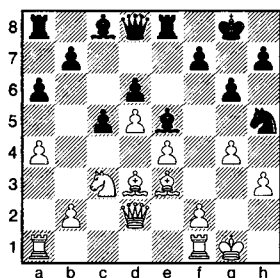
Black to Move!

49 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Black is Winning
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

49 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖h5-g7
B	1...♖h5-f6
C	1...♕e5xc3
D	1...♔d8-h4

(49) Calderin,R – Sarioego,W *Manzanillo, 1991***Black to Move!**

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	24%	37%	42%	46%	61%	91%
B	1	39%	36%	43%	46%	20%	9%
C		37%	27%	7%	8%	19%	
D				8%			

2 A		18%	21%	7%	19%	10%	
B		12%	23%	14%	8%	9%	
C	-1	12%					
D	5	58%	56%	79%	73%	81%	100%

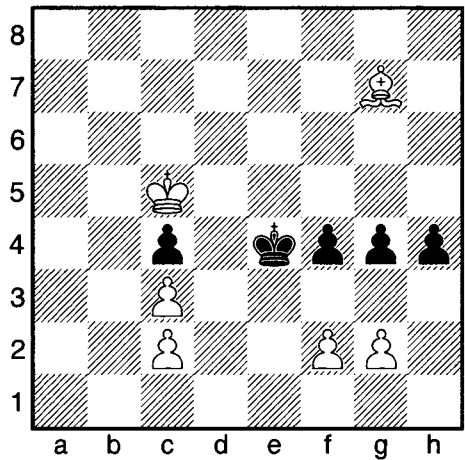
49-1 It looks like White should be pretty happy with his position. He already has a space advantage in the center and on the ♔-side. The latter could be expanded even further after the ♖ retreats. However, by starting the actions first, Black is able to seize the initiative. While not yet winning against the best defense (1 point for), Black is better (5 points for <A>).

49-2 In this critical position the next move will determine who will come out on top. After 1...♗g7 (<A>) 2.♖f4 White is dominating. Also slow is 1...♗f6 () 2.♙g5 and Black is forced to defend. Even worse is 1...♙xc3? (-1 point for <C>), because it is practically “suicidal” to give up a dark-squared ♙ when the dark squares around Black ♔ are so weak.

An aggressive 1...♞h4! is the move to play (5 points for <D>) as it turns the tables! The threat of ♞xh3 must be addressed. The best would have been 2.♖f3 opening the route for White ♞ to help out in defense. Black would have had some attacking options, but nothing immediate. After 2...♗f6 (2...♞xh3 3.♖xh5 or 2...♗g3 3.♗f2 ♞xh3? 4.♗h2) 3.♞g2 ♖h5, Black has good attacking chances via ♖h5xg4-♗g7-♗h8.

In the game, White challenged his opponent by playing 2.♖xh5, but after explosive 2...♙h2+!! saw his ♔’s position falling apart. The game continued 3.♙xh2 ♞h3+ 4.♙g1 ♞g4+ 5.♙h1 ♞f3+ 6.♙h2 (6.♙g1 ♙h3) ♗e5 and White had to resign. Stopping ♗h5+ would have cost too much material.

Question #50



White to Move!

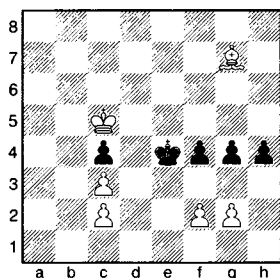
50 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Draw
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

50 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖c5×c4
B	1. ♔g7–d4 ♜f4–f3 2. ♜g2–g3
C	1. ♔g7–d4 ♜f4–f3 2. ♜g2×f3+
D	1. ♜g2–g3

(50) Chehover, V 1954



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	2	56%	62%	64%	55%	45%	33%
B	5	8%	9%	14%	28%	47%	67%
C		13%					
D		23%	29%	22%	17%	8%	

2 A		39%	13%	29%	16%		
B	5	5%	17%	12%	17%	30%	72%
C	1	27%	50%	45%	67%	70%	28%
D		29%	20%	14%			

50-1 White would have been very happy with his position if it wasn't for one "small" problem - his ♔ can't stop Black h-♙. You get 2 points if you thought that *Black is winning* and selected <A>. However, White can survive, thanks to yet another amazing defensive idea! You get 5 points if you thought Black has a Draw and selected .

50-2 Black's intention is pretty straight forward - to breakthrough the White ♙s on the ♔-side. White must address the immediate 1...♙h3! after which the h-♙ gets through. Neither 1.♙xc4 (<A>), nor 1.♙g3 (<D>) do that.

After 1.♙d4 White is ready to respond to 1...♙h3? by 2.♙f3+! stopping Black ♙s, i.e. 2...♙xf3 (2...♙f5 3.♙xg4+ and 4.♙xh3) 3.♙xh3. However, after 1...♙f3! White is still in trouble! After 2. ♙xf3 (1 point for <C>) ♙xf3 White can only slow down the ♙s, but not stop them in view of upcoming 3...♙h3 4...♙xf2 5...♙g3 etc...

So, what is left? Well, have you considered that if White couldn't stop the ♙s, then he must prepare to defend against the ♚? One of the rare successful ways of dealing with the ♚ is by building a *fortress*. After 1.♙d4 ♙f3! 2.♙g3!! (5 points for) ♙h3! 3.♙b4!! White ♙ is rushing to the "safe house" on b2 3...♙h2 4.♙a3 ♙a1 ♚ 5.♙b2 and makes it there, just in time! Black has to settle for a Draw despite having a huge material advantage. With minimal accuracy from White, the ♚ can't inflict any damage and Black ♙ can't get through and help.

Fortress is a fantastic defensive resource.

Interim Report: Questions 41 - 50

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

Table 1-5 *Score to Rating Conversion*

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	842	55	1898
10	875	60	2051
15	909	65	2115
20	1033	70	2227
25	1153	75	2317
30	1308	80	2337
35	1459	85	2402
40	1535	90	2427
45	1605	95	2493
50	1735	100	2500

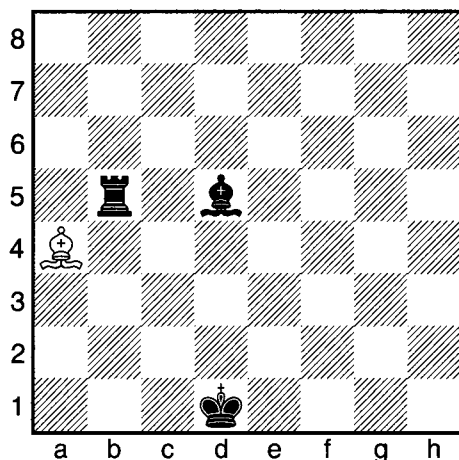
Table 2-5 *Score to 50th Percentile Conversion*

Rating Group	Score
Overall	52
2400+	92
2200-2400	71
1800-2200	56
1400-1800	52
1000-1400	38
Unrated-1000	22

Let's Take a Break:

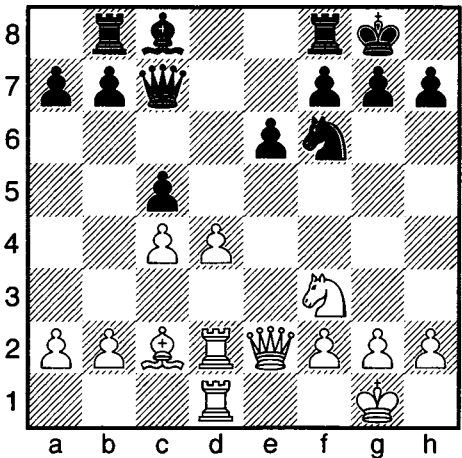


Q: White just made a move. Suddenly, his ♔ fell off the board. Can you place it back to the square it fell from?



A: The answer – White ♔ fell from c3. How did this happen you may ask? Initially White ♔ was on b3, White ♖ on c2 and Black ♜ on b4. With his ♜ in check, White was to move. After 1. ♖c4 ♜xc3 (en passant) 2. ♜xc3 and here is when White ♔ fell off the board.

Question #51



White to Move!

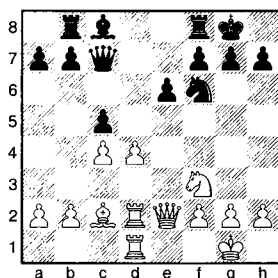
51 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Significantly Better
B	White is Slightly Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Slightly Better

51 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖d4-d5
B	1. ♜f3-e5
C	1. ♘f3-e5
D	1. ♘f3-g5

(51) Fine, R – Thomas, G Hastings 1936/37



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	15%	20%	54%	78%	91%	100%
B	1	61%	64%	36%	22%	9%	
C		20%	16%	10%			
D	-1	4%					

2 A		56%	55%	27%	16%		
B	5	26%	25%	33%	57%	100%	100%
C		8%	8%	19%	17%		
D		10%	12%	21%	10%		

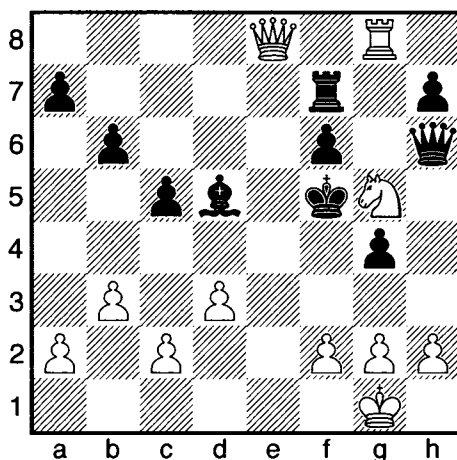
51-1 White has a superb position. He has an advantage in development, a better piece placement and a flexible \triangle structure. You get 5 points for selecting <A>.

51-2 Black's key defender is the ♔ and eliminating it is the best strategic decision. The correct choice is **1. ♔e5!** (5 points for) and Black's position is falling apart. After **1... ♔xe5** (1... ♖e8 2. ♔xc7 ♜xc7 3. ♜xc5 ♜a6 4. ♜d8 and White is dominating) **2. ♜xe5** White ♜s get the open file and Black ♜ , the only developed Black piece remaining, is being harassed back to the 8th rank! Compare the starting diagram with the position only 4 moves later, after **2... ♜e8 3. ♜g5 ♜g6 4. ♜d8** . Black was doomed and he resigned 13 moves later.

The other White's choices on the 1st move are all reasonable and worthy of consideration. However, none of them is as convincing as the direct **1. ♔e5!**

If you trade your opponent's best pieces, his defense may crumble pretty quickly.

Question #52



White to Move!

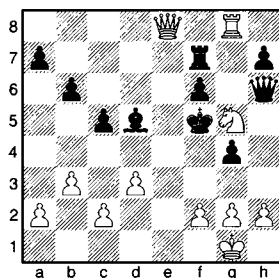
52 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Winning

52 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖e8-c8+
B	1. ♖e8-e4+
C	1. ♠c2-c4
D	1. ♘g5xf7

(52) Timman, J - Van der Wiel, J Rozenburg (rapid), 2001



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	76%	75%	93%	100%	100%	100%
B		24%	25%	7%			
C							
D	-2						

2 A	1	25%	14%	23%	8%		
B	5	29%	50%	58%	92%	100%	100%
C		25%	17%	12%			
D	-2	21%	19%	7%			

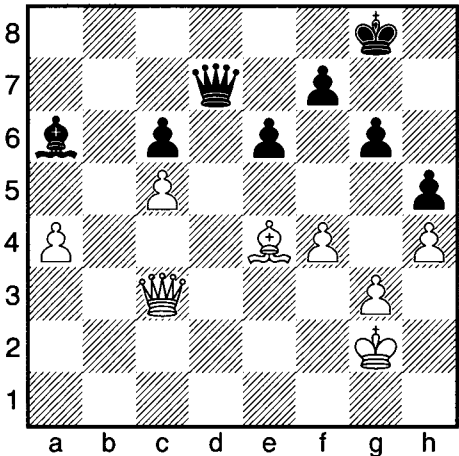
52-1 With his ♔ being out in the open and chased by all White's remaining pieces, Black is "dead" lost. You get 5 points for selecting <A>. However, during severe time pressure, White missed the opportunity to seal the victory.

52-2 With many good choices available finding the best one in a split second that White had left on his clock proved to be impossible. I expect that, having time available, you have made the precise choice.

I surely hope it was not 1. ♖xf7?? (-2 points for <D>) ♔c1#. In the game, **Timman** lost on time after the unconvincing 1. ♖c4?! (<C>) ♖e7! 2. ♗xe7 ♘xg8. Also, 1. ♗c8+ (1 point for <A>) doesn't improve the situation. After 1... ♗e5 2. ♗e8+ ♗f5, we are back to the starting position.

To get 5 points you had to find the quick finish after a pretty ♗ sacrifice - 1. ♗e4+! (5 points for) ♘xe4 2. ♖xe4+ ♗f4 3. ♖g3+ ♗e5 4. ♖xf7+ and 5. ♖xh6. All of Black pieces are gone!

Question #53



White to Move!

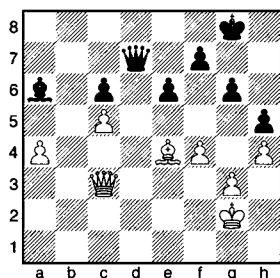
53 - I A part of White’s long-term strategy is

A	Trading ♖s
B	Trading ♜s
C	Trading all pieces - ♖s and ♜s
D	Avoiding piece trades

53 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♜e4-f3
B	1. ♖c3-f3
C	1. ♖c3-f6
D	1. ♔g2-f2

(53) Andersson,U - Larsen,B Pinamar, 2001



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	25%	19%	34%	56%	76%	92%
B	1	26%	28%	29%	14%	14%	8%
C		27%	31%	20%	21%	10%	
D		22%	22%	17%	9%		

2 A	5	12%	35%	43%	42%	84%	100%
B		49%	29%	36%	41%	9%	
C	-1	26%	36%				
D		13%		21%	17%	7%	

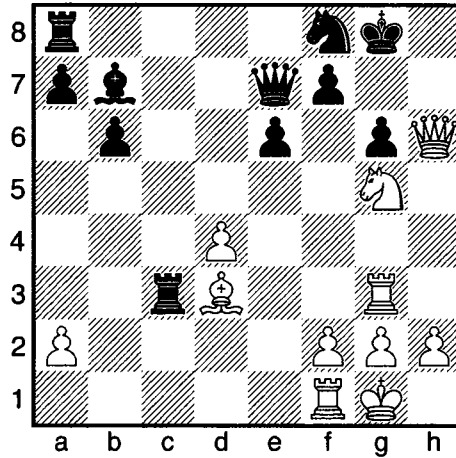
53-1 White has an advantage since his pieces are more active and the outside passed a-♙ is a dangerous weapon. However, Black pieces are placed well. The ♔ is defending the weak c-♙ and is ready to start harassing White ♙. The ♘ is blocking the a-♙ and is ready to support his ♔'s activity. It is hard for White to make a serious progress without trading down.

What should White trade? Well, the best strategy is trading ♔s (5 points for <A>), as it would leave Black with many ♙ weaknesses, *bad* ♘ and no counter-play. Trading ♘s (1 point for) might be good for White in some instances. However, if done short of a perfect situation, White ♔ may not be able to deal simultaneously with such issues as support of the a-♙, defense of the c-♙ and shielding the ♙ from annoying checks of the ♔. Finally, trading everything and going into the ♙ Endgame (<C>) won't work if Black ♙ is near the a-♙. There is no way for White ♙ to advance on the ♔-side and, after ♙f7-f6, Black will shutdown the ♙-side too.

53-2 Sloppy is 1. ♔f3 (), since after 1... ♔d4 Black can exchange his weak ♙c6 for the ♙c5. It is also too early to start bringing the ♙ into the game - 1. ♙f2?! (<D>) due to 1... ♔d1. You are penalized 1 point for careless 1. ♔f6? (<C>) that, once again, allows Black to assault White ♙ after 1... ♔d1. The best is the accurate 1. ♘f3! (5 points for <A>), preventing the irritating ♔d1 and also preparing ♔c3-c2-d1 aimed at trading Black's key defender - the ♔, or forcing her from the optimal post.

Proper determination of relative value of the remaining pieces helps to come up with correct trading ideas and choose the best-suited move.

Question #54



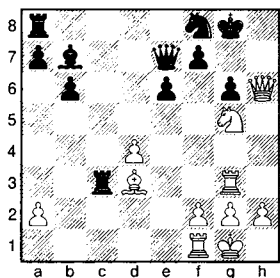
Black to Move!

54 - I White is threatening

A	♜g5×f7
B	♞d3×g6
C	Both A and B are Correct
D	Both A and B are Incorrect

54 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♞a8–c8
B	1...♞e7–f6
C	1...♞c3×d3
D	1...♠f7–f6

(54) Segovia, J - Fischer, R *Foxwoods, 2001*Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	1	17%	50%	36%	16%	9%
	B	1	25%	17%	33%	17%	24%
	C	5	19%	12%	21%	50%	67%
	D		39%	21%	10%	17%	

2	A		42%	24%	26%	25%	16%	28%
	B		21%	26%	21%	17%	14%	
	C	5	27%	28%	34%	43%	61%	72%
	D		10%	22%	19%	15%	9%	

54-1 You only get 5 points if you recognized the seriousness of White threats and selected <C>. Indeed, White wins after 1. ♖xf7! ♜xd3! (else, 2. ♕xg6 is coming) 2. ♜xg6+ ♜xg6 3. ♖xg6+ ♜f8 4. ♜g5 and Black can't stop the multiple threats – ♜h7+, ♜xe6+ and ♖xd3. Also, winning is 1. ♕xg6! (indirectly attacking the ♜ on c3) ♜xg3 2. ♜h7+ and 3. ♜xg3. If you recognized just one of the threats (either <A> or), you get only 1 point.

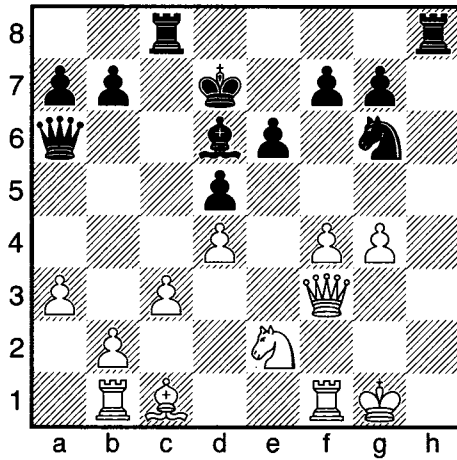
54-2 Hopefully, starting by identifying White's threats made your move selection for Black somewhat easier. After 1... ♜ac8? (<A>) the ♜ on c3 is protected in the "♕xg6" line, but 2. ♜xf7! still delivers! After 1... ♖f6? () 2. ♕xg6 still works, as the ♜ on c3 remains unprotected. For example, if 2... ♜xg3 then 3. ♜h7+! (3. ♕xf7+?? ♖xf7!–, Foygel) ♜xh7 4. ♖xh7+ ♜f8 5. ♜fxf3 ♖xd4+ 6. ♜h1 and Black is lost.

1... ♜f6 (<D>) solves both threats, but not entirely. After 2. ♕xg6! ♜xg3 3. ♜xg3! the ♜f1 joins the attack preventing Black from taking irritating ♜ on g5 (3... ♜xg5 4. ♜f7).

Yet, Black can survive the threats and even get a manageable position after 1... ♜d3! (5 points for <C>) 2. ♜d3 ♜f6! Not only does this move force the ♜ to retreat, but it also allows Black ♖ to go to g7 and defend against invasion on the h-file. Once the ♜ retreats, 3... ♕a6 wins back the exchange!

Recognizing ALL of your opponent's threats is the key to success.

Question #55



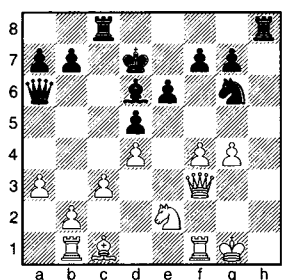
Black to Move!

55 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

55 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖g6-h4
B	1...♔d7-c7
C	1...♜h8-h4
D	1...♞f7-f5

(55) Gibson,T – Fischer,R *Foxwoods, 2001*

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	55%	77%	93%	100%	100%	100%
B		8%					
C		37%	23%	7%			
D	-1						

2 A	5	8%	6%	29%	25%	48%	78%
B	1	5%	22%	8%	11%	12%	
C		62%	47%	49%	35%	16%	
D	2	25%	25%	14%	29%	24%	22%

55-1 With Black's pieces well-placed and White ♔'s position being compromised, it is not a surprise that Black is better (5 points for <A>). It is not clear as to why one would think that *White is winning*, but if you did, the choice <D> costs you 1 point.

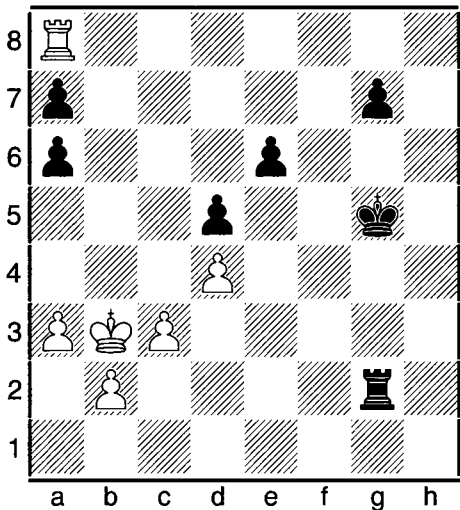
55-2 While it is very enticing to double the ♖s on the h-file, you get no points for 1...♖h4 (<C>). Black will have plenty of opportunities to do that, but, with his own ♔ stuck in center, Black needs some basic prophylactics against White's advance ♕f4–f5!

The remaining 3 choices all have some merit. In a way, it is a matter of personal preference of which to pick. The most convincing is the direct 1...♖h4! (5 points for <A>). After 2.♗e3 ♖h7 (or even 2...♗f5) Black can continue the assault without worrying about his ♔.

Interesting, but not necessary is 1...♗c7 (1 point for) with the idea to hide the Black ♔ on b8. Also deserving attention is 1...♗f5 (<D>) 2.♗×f5 ♗×f5 (but not 2...♖h4 due to 3.♗×e6+). I award 2 points for this selection.

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

Question #56



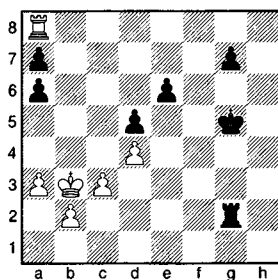
Black to Move!

56 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Significantly Better
B	Black is Slightly Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Slightly Better

56 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♔g5-f6
B	1...♔g5-f4
C	1...♔g5-h4
D	1...♖g2-f2

(56) Gibson,T - Fischer,R *Foxwoods, 2001*

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		36%	50%	7%	45%		18%
B		29%	28%	64%	39%	60%	13%
C	2	10%	7%	21%	8%	27%	31%
D	5	25%	15%	8%	8%	13%	38%

2 A	5	23%	25%	21%	33%	34%	52%
B		50%	63%	50%	42%	51%	48%
C		8%		9%	7%		
D		19%	12%	20%	18%	15%	

56-1 Black didn't manage to win in the *Middlegame* (see #55) and settled for this dynamic *Endgame* instead. If you answered this question correctly, you are in the minority! Black should be pretty happy; he has an extra ♖, passed g7-♖ that is ready to roll, and active ♔ and ♚.

Despite all of the above, Black is actually worse here and has to find a very precise move to stay in the game. Black can't defend his ♔-side ♖s and White is looking to execute a standard multi-step plan:

- Winning ♖s on a7 and a6,
- Positioning the ♚ behind Black's passed g-♖,
- Advancing ♖s a and b with support of the ♔,
- Giving up, when necessary, the ♚ for g-♖.

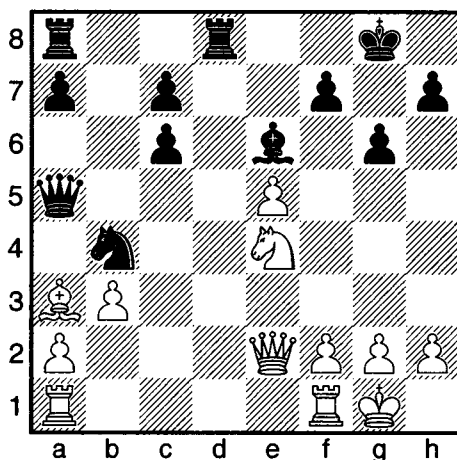
While the best play will likely lead to a Draw, I award 5 Points for <D> - *White is slightly better* and 2 points for <C> - *Equal*.

56-2 Proper evaluation and accurate detection of White's plan makes the move selection process a lot easier. Look at the above-mentioned plan and see if Black can do anything to stop any of the steps?

In reality, the only step Black can tackle is (b) - preventing White ♚ from getting into the best defensive position – behind the ♖ on g-file. After surprising, yet appropriate 1...♙f6! (5 points for <A>) 2.♚xa7 ♖g5 3.♚xa6 ♚h2! 4.♚a8 ♙f7! Black ♔ prevents ♚g8. White should probably settle for a Draw after 5.♚a7+ ♙f8 6.♚a8 ♙f7. But, see what you can find...

Detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this book. Try using my strategic approach while practicing against a friend or computer.

Question #57



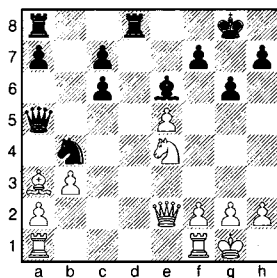
White to Move!

57 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

57 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖a3–c1
B	1. ♖a3×b4
C	1. ♖a3–b2
D	1. ♘e4–f6+

(57) Fischer, R - Levina, A *Foxwoods, 2001*

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		30%	26%	36%	12%		
B	5	42%	42%	50%	67%	100%	100%
C			20%	7%	10%		
D		28%	12%	7%	11%		

2 A		11%	8%	28%	39%	33%	8%
B	2	21%	37%	29%	37%	23%	37%
C	5		12%	7%	11%	29%	45%
D		68%	43%	36%	13%	15%	10%

57-1 White seemed to have an overwhelming advantage due to:

- Compromised Black's Δ structure and weak ccc protection,
- White fff is ready to invade f6,
- White ggg can potentially dominate dark squares.

But don't bury Black yet! Consider some of his pluses -

- Black ddd is controlling the open d-file,
- Black aaa on a5 is attacking White ggg and the Δ on e5,
- Black bbb on b4 is ready to jump on d3,
- Black ddd on d5 is controlling some key diagonals.

Active placement of Black pieces offsets some, but not all of White's advantages. White is better - 5 points for .

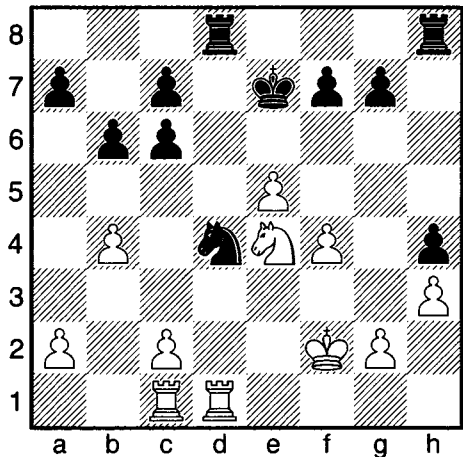
57-2 White's first priority is to try and preserve the ggg that could help in exploiting weak dark squares. However, it is not an easy task, as in the process, other White pieces can become targets of active Black pieces.

The best choice is **1. $\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}\text{b}2!$** (5 points for <C>) with the following variation **1... $\text{f}\text{f}\text{f}\text{d}3$ 2. $\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}\text{c}3$ 3. $\text{a}\text{a}\text{a}\text{b}5$ 4. $\text{a}\text{a}\text{a}\text{e}3$ 5. $\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}7$ 6. $\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}\text{d}2$ and 7. $\text{a}\text{a}\text{a}\text{h}6$. White could preserve the ggg and continue pressuring Black ccc .**

After the natural **1. $\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}\text{c}1$** (<A>) **2. $\text{f}\text{f}\text{f}\text{d}3$ 3. $\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}5$ 4. $\text{a}\text{a}\text{a}\text{d}4$** , White might find himself in a rather bumpy situation with Black pieces very actively harassing various targets. Impulsive **1. $\text{f}\text{f}\text{f}\text{f}6+?!$** (<D>) is not a good choice. After **1... $\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}7$** , White loses control over the square c3 and can't save the ggg .

If you didn't find a good way to preserve the ggg and played **1. $\text{g}\text{g}\text{g}\text{x}\text{b}4!$** ? () you get 2 points. After **1... $\text{a}\text{a}\text{a}\text{x}\text{b}4$ 2. $\text{a}\text{a}\text{a}\text{a}\text{c}1$** White has an advantage.

Question #58



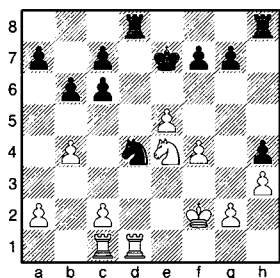
Black to Move!

58 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

58 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖h8-h5
B	1...♗f7-f5
C	1...♘d4-f5
D	1...♘d4xc2

(58) Kasparov, G - Kramnik, V *Wijk aan Zee, 2001*

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	46%	52%	36%	8%	28%	8%
	B	5	29%	25%	50%	58%	72%
	C		25%	23%	14%	34%	
	D						
2	A		42%	37%	24%	37%	49%
	B		23%	27%	17%	16%	
	C	5	27%	36%	59%	47%	51%
	D	-2	8%				

58-1 Two big “Ks” - Kasparov and Kramnik are on the opposite sides of the *Berlin Wall*. This slow variation of the Rui Lopez has become quite popular after their battles for the World Championship in late 90s.

Position is approximately equal (5 points for). In spite of having ♙ majority on the ♚-side Black can't advance there because of the double ♙s. At the same time White's ♙ majority is “frozen” on the ♜-side!

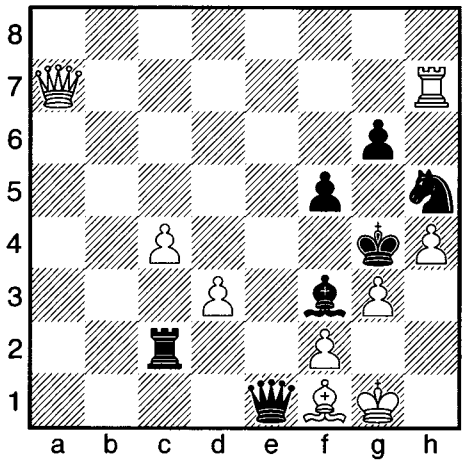
58-2 If you selected aggressive **1...♖h5** (<A>), you've played like Kramnik, but don't expect a pat on the back – this is a sloppy move. Amazingly, Kasparov missed the opportunity to play **2.♙g4!** getting his ♜-side ♙s rolling. Here is the point - Black can't play the planned **2...♙xg3+** since after **3.♘xg3** White wins material. Not only is the White ♘ directly attacking the now active ♖h5, but also, indirectly threatening the ♘ on d4 (after **4.♙x d4 ♖x d4 5.♘f5+**). If Black retreats the ♖ instead of taking on g3, White can play ♙f4–f5 and his ♙ chain instantly becomes very dangerous.

Another active ♙ push **1...♙f5** () gives White unnecessary chance in the form of a protected passed ♙ on e5. Having this ♙ enables White to look forward towards virtually any piece trade.

Terrible blunder is **1...♘xc2??** (-2 points for <D>) as Black loses the ♘ after the intermediate **2.♖xd8!** and **3.♖xc2**.

Accurate **1...♘f5** (<C>) maintains equality and earns you 5 points.

Question #59



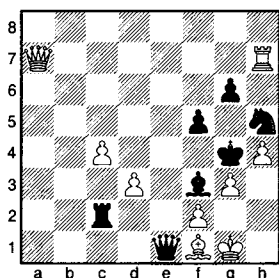
White to Move!

59 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Winning
D	White has a Mate in 1.

59 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖h7-e7
B	1. ♖h7×h5
C	1. ♔a7-d4+
D	1. ♔a7-e3

(59) Illescas Cordoba, M - Fernandez Garcia, J (analysis) Bilbao, 1987White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		29%	23%	21%	8%		
B		21%	6%				
C	5	50%	71%	79%	92%	100%	100%
D	-1						

2 A	5	25%	28%	24%	34%	82%	92%
B		18%	25%	29%	22%	6%	8%
C		46%	47%	40%	44%	12%	
D	-1	11%		7%			

59-1 This extremely wild position could have happened in the game. Both ♔s are struggling to survive. There is no *checkmate* in 1 for either side (-1 point for <D>), but Black is threatening *checkmate* in 2 after **1...♙xf1+** and **2...♖c1#**. However, it is White who is starting his decisive attack first! 5 points for <C> - *White is winning*.

59-2 Precision in calculation is invaluable in such a *dynamic* position. If you recognized the threat of ♙xf1+, then you should have eliminated otherwise promising **1.♜xh5** ().

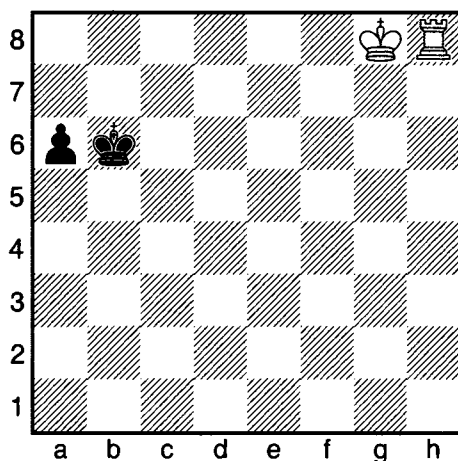
Furthermore, White is not winning after **1.♙d4+** (<C>), for example **1...♙e4** (1...♜f4 2.♙d7+) **2.♜xe4 ♜d2!** 3.♙b6 (3.♙g2!??? [with idea 3...♜xd4 4.♜f3# Foygel] ♜xg3→) ♜f3 4.♙b3+ ♜g4 5.♙b6 and White has to settle for a Draw.

Obvious blunder is **1.♙e3?** (-1 point for <D>) due to the simple **1...♙xe3 2.♜xe3 ♜xg3** and Black is then in charge.

However, White is indeed triumphant after the effective **1.♜e7!** (5 points for <A>). Following this move, White maintains the pressure on Black's ♜, while preventing Black's threats. After **1... ♙d1** (1...♙xf1+ 2.♜xf1 ♜c1+ 3.♜e1, or 1...♙c3 2.♜e6, or 1...♙xf2+ 2.♙xf2 ♜xf2 3.♜xf2 ♜xg3 4.♜g7, or 1...♙e2 2.♙d4 ♜f4 3.♙d7+ with a *checkmate* after a ♙'s zigzag – 3.♜f3 4.♙c6+ ♜g4 5.♙xg6+ ♜f3 and 6.♙h5#) **2.♙d4+ ♙e4 3.♜xe4+!** Black is lost!

Learn to recognize your opponent's threats and you will find "cool" defensive moves like **1.♜e7!**

Question #60



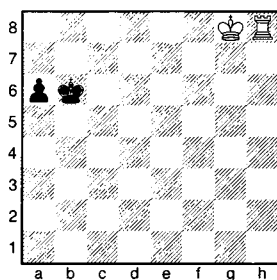
60 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	If <u>White to Move</u> , the ♔ alone can keep the ♔ from advancing
B	If <u>Black to move</u> , Black can Draw
C	Both A and B are Correct
D	Both A and B are Incorrect

60 - II Black to Move! What is the best move?

A	1...♔a6-a5
B	1...♔b6-c5
C	1...♔b6-b5
D	Both B and C yield the same result

(60) Maizelis, I 1950



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	1	13%	22%	32%	34%	38%	22%
B	1	18%	26%	31%	9%		
C	5	32%	27%	30%	57%	62%	78%
D		37%	25%	7%			

2 A	-1	34%	25%	14%		8%	
B	5	4%		11%	50%	61%	83%
C		25%	24%	21%	8%		
D	1	37%	51%	54%	42%	31%	17%

60-1 A few important principles in the ♖ vs. ♔ + ♕ Endgames.

- The ♖ needs to slow down the ♔ in order for the ♕ to join the battle.
- When the defending ♕ hasn't crossed the 3d (6th for Black) rank, the ♖ may be able to stop the ♔ single-handedly. For example, after **1.♖h5!** White wins instantly since the ♔ cannot advance very far. I.e. **1...♔a5 2.♕f7 ♔a4 3.♕e6** and White ♕ has plenty of time to come over as the ♔ is "frozen". If it goes forward **3...♔a3**, the ♖ can win it at once - **4.♖h3 ♔a2 5.♖a3** etc...
- The *shouldering* concept as well as the explanation on how Black can get a Draw (if he is to move) is addressed in part 2 of this question.

Overall, both <A> and are correct, but each earn you only 1 point if selected separately. You get the full 5 points for selecting <C>.

60-2 Black loses after **1...♔a5?** (-1 point for <A>) **2.♖h5** etc (see 60-1 above). Is there a difference between **1...♕b5** and **1...♕c5**? Absolutely! While in either case, the ♕ goes towards the b2, one of the moves has a bonus idea! The best is **1...♕c5!** (5 points for) since, in addition to going in the right direction, Black ♕ is also prepared to block his nemesis - White ♕. The latter has a direct path ♕g8-f7-e6-d5 to close in on the ♔ in the next 3-4 moves. Via **1...♕c5!**, Black disturbs this plan and gains critical time. After **2.♕f7 ♔a5 3.♕e6 ♔a4** a Draw is inevitable, i.e. **4.♖h3 ♕b4 5.♕d5 ♔a3 6.♖h4+ ♕c3** or **4.♖a8 ♕b4 5.♕d5 ♔a3 6.♕d4 ♕b3 7.♕d3 ♕b2 8.♖b8 ♕c1!**, etc...

The other ♕ move - **1...♕b5** (<C>) loses after **2.♕f7 ♔a5 3.♕e6 ♔a4 4.♕d5 ♕b4 5.♕d4 ♕b3 6.♖h3+ ♕b2 7.♕c4 ♔a3 8.♖h2+ ♕b1 9.♕b3** and together White ♕ and ♖ outmuscle Black ♕.

Analyze this Endgame in greater detail with a friend or computer.

Interim Report: Questions 51 - 60

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

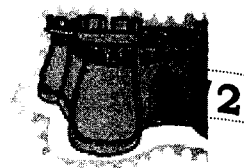
Table 1-6 Score to Rating Conversion

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	852	55	1976
10	906	60	2101
15	993	65	2176
20	1087	70	2251
25	1200	75	2314
30	1308	80	2365
35	1418	85	2432
40	1539	90	2482
45	1680	95	2495
50	1860	100	2500

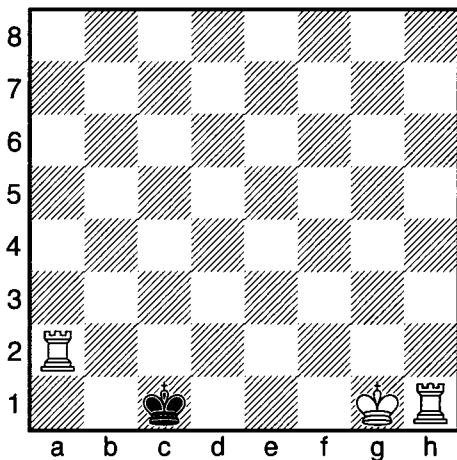
Table 2-6 Score to 50th Percentile Conversion

Rating Group	Score
Overall	46
2400+	93
2200-2400	69
1800-2200	54
1400-1800	45
1000-1400	37
Unrated-1000	25

Let's Take a Break:

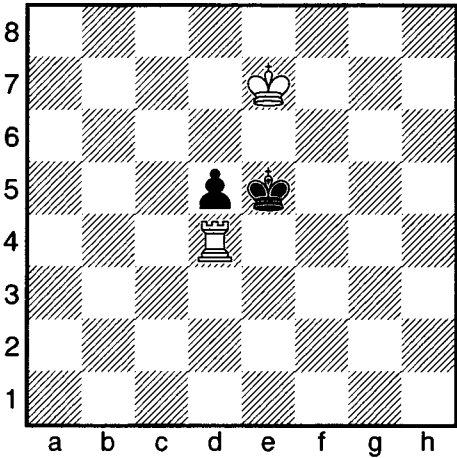


Q: Can you see how White can *checkmate* in $\frac{1}{2}$ move?



A: White just needs to complete his last move, which happened to be ♖-side castle. White ♔ just moved to g1, so the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ of White's move is to place the ♜ on f1. 1.0-0 #.

Question #61



White to Move!

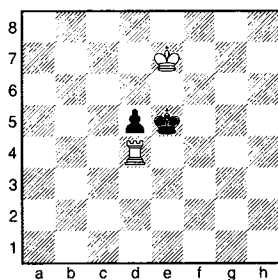
61 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	White is Winning and ♖ can stop advancement of the ♙ alone
B	White is Winning but ♖ cannot stop the ♙ without the help of ♔
C	Draw
D	Black is Winning

61 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖d4–h4
B	1. ♖d4–d1
C	1. ♖d4–d2
D	1. ♖d4–a4

(61) Reti, R 1928



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		24%	10%	8%			
B	5	54%	67%	76%	83%	89%	100%
C		22%	23%	16%	17%	11%	
D	-2						

2 A		27%	31%	29%	33%		
B		40%	19%	34%	25%	29%	16%
C	5	12%	26%	30%	42%	71%	84%
D		21%	24%	7%			

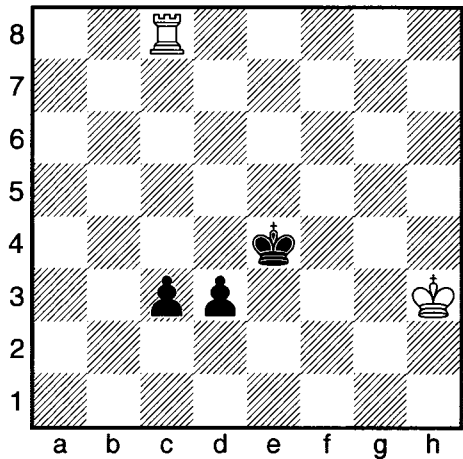
61-1 “Cutting off the ♔” technique described in the question #60 doesn't work here because Black ♔ has already reached the 5th rank. Thus choice <A> is wrong. To win, White ♔ has to hurry up to help the ♖. Despite its poor placement, White ♔ can get back just in time! White wins (5 points for) by utilizing the *zugzwang* idea, which is rather surprising for such a *dynamic* position.

61-2 Nothing is accomplished by keeping the ♖ on the 4th rank. After **1.♖h4** (<A>, or **1.♖a4**, <D>) **1.♙d4 2.♙d7 1.♙d3 3.♙c6 1.♙d2 4.♖h1 ♙d4** Black ♙ is actively supporting the ♙ while White ♙ is lagging way behind.

Choosing between **1.♖d1** () and **1.♖d2** (<C>) is tricky. Let's ignore the exact square for a moment and see what Black would do. In fact, he would have to play **1...♙d4** keeping White ♙ blocked for another move. With his ♙ not able to make any progress (**3.♙d7 ♙d5! 4.♙c7 ♙c5**) and his ♖ stuck on the d-file (else **♙d4-d3**), White is left with **2.♖d2** or **2.♖d1**, depending on what the first move was. Since the goal is to keep the ♖ as far away from Black ♙ as possible, the latter is preferable. So, now we are ready to reconstruct the variation - **1.♖d2!** (5 points for <C>) **1...♙d4** (less challenging is **1...♙e4? 2.♙d6 ♙d4 3.♙c5 ♙d3 4.♙c4** etc...) **2.♖d1!** This is a mutual *zugzwang* situation (the side, which is to move, is at the disadvantage). After **2...♙d5! 3.♙d7!** Black ♙ has to give way **3...♙e4 4.♙c6 ♙e3** (there is no ♖ on d2 to attack) **5.♙c5 ♙d3 6.♙c4 ♙d2 7.♙c3** and White wins. Analyze this Endgame in greater detail with a friend or computer.

Before making a reasonable move, try to calculate variations precisely.

Question #62



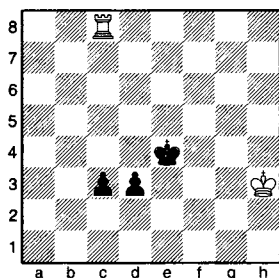
White to Move!

62 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Draw
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

62 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖c8-c4+
B	1. ♖c8xc3
C	1. ♔h3-g2
D	1. ♖c8-e8+

(62) Training Position: ♖ vs. 2 ♗sWhite to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	1	20%	13%	7%	27%	15%	7%
B	5	72%	70%	79%	73%	85%	93%
C		8%	17%	14%			
D							

2 A	5	60%	64%	71%	80%	84%	93%
B		25%	23%	15%	20%	16%	7%
C		15%	6%	5%			
D			7%	9%			

62-1 A common chess saying is – “two ♗s on the 6th rank (3d for Black) are as good as a ♖.” In the *Endgame*, escorted by their ♖, the ♗s are virtually unstoppable. In the diagram, Black is trying to get one of them promoted, thus reaching a theoretically won *Endgame* ♖ vs. ♖. However, giving up one of the ♗s was premature and White can get a Draw. You get 1 point for choice <A> and 5 points for .

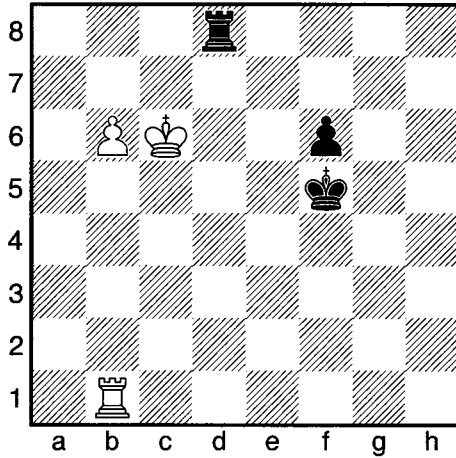
62-2 White has no chance if Black keeps both ♗s: 1.♔g2 (<C>) ♖d2 2.♖d8 ♗c2 or 1.♖e8+ (<D>) ♗d4 2.♖d8+ ♗e3 3.♖e8+ ♗d2 etc. Thus one of the ♗s must be eliminated at once. However, after the direct 1.♖xc3 () the other ♗ gets through 1...♖d2 2.♖c4+ ♗e5! (a little accuracy is a must 2...♗d5? 3.♖d8=; 2...♗e3 3.♖c3+ ♗e2? 4.♖c2 and 5.♖xd2=) 3.♖c5+ ♗e6 4.♖c6+ ♗d7. Finally, Black ♗ crossed the d-file and the next will be 5...♖d1♖.

What saves White is an intermediate check 1.♖c4+! (5 points for <A>). No matter where the ♗ goes, White plays 2.♖xc3 and he is not in danger anymore! For example 1...♗e3 2.♖xc3 pinning the ♗ or 1...♗d5(e5) 2.♖xc3 ♗d4 (careless 2...♖d2?? even loses after 3.♖d3+) 3.♖d8 etc...

White can't expect anything better than a Draw, despite winning the ♗. Black's remaining ♗, supported by Black ♖, is too dangerous and White ♖ can't help the ♖, which eventually would have to be traded for the ♗.

Intermediate checks always must be taken into account.

Question #63



Black to Move!

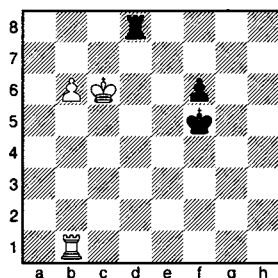
63 - I Which is the correct short-term plan?

A	White ♔ must try to stop the Black ♗
B	Black ♔ must try to stop White ♗
C	Black ♔ must stay near Black ♗ and help it to advance
D	Both A and B are Correct

63 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♗f5-e5
B	1...♗f5-e4
C	1...♗f5-g4
D	1...♗f5-e6

(63) Alekhine, A - Bogoljubow, E Netherlands, 1929



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		11%	12%				
B		21%	18%	7%			
C	5	50%	57%	86%	92%	100%	100%
D	-1	18%	13%	7%	8%		

2 A				14%	8%		
B	5	45%	53%	50%	75%	85%	92%
C		7%	17%	36%	17%	15%	8%
D	-1	48%	30%				

63-1 The *Evaluation* should always come before the *Planning*. White is trying to win, since his ♖ is further advanced and his ♔ is more active. White's long-term goal is to win the ♖ for the ♔ and then to be able to neutralize advancement of Black ♔.

Now, the short-term plans. Without the help of his ♔, White ♖ couldn't advance, as Black would just block it via ♜b8. Thus <A> is wrong. Black ♔ is too far from the b-♖ and can't help stopping it, so is wrong too. 1 point penalty if you selected <D>.

The only sensible choice is <C> (5 points) as Black's plan must be to have his ♔ supporting the f-♖ and, when necessary, to sacrifice the ♖ for ♔b.

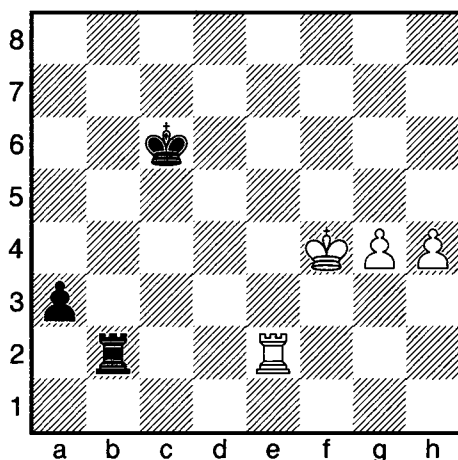
63-2 Since Black ♔ must escort his ♖, a couple of choices can be quickly eliminated. 1...♔e5 (<A>) is a waste of a move (vs. 1...♔e4). Even worse is 1...♔e6 (-1 point for <D>), since the ♔ is heading in the wrong direction.

Calculation is helpful, but not required in order to select from the two remaining choices. The defending ♔ should try to "push away" his counterpart (see also #61). Instead, Black played erroneous 1...♔g4 (<C>) and after 2.♖b7 ♖f5 3.♖b8 ♜ ♜×b8 4.♜×b8 ♖f4 5.♔d5 ♖f3 6.♔e4 ♖f2 7.♜f8 ♔g3 8.♔e3! White ♔ arrived just in time to win!

After 1...♔e4! (5 points for <C>) Black ♔ could have created an obstacle on the path of White ♔ (no 5.♔d5 in the line above). Analyze the starting position to make sure that White ♔ couldn't make it to e3 in time.

Recognize opponent's plans and make your own plans accordingly.

Question #64



White to Move!

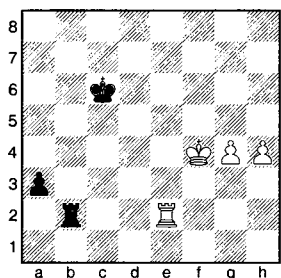
64 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	Black ♔ must go and help promoting Black ♙
B	Black wants to place his ♖ in front of Black ♙
C	Black wants to place his ♖ behind Black ♙
D	White should try to exchange ♖s

64 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖e2-e6+
B	1. ♖e2-e3
C	1. ♖e2-e1
D	1. ♖e2×b2

(64) Dreev, A - Moskalenko, V Lvov, 1985



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		48%	28%	29%	17%	21%	
B		22%	26%	14%	12%		
C	5	25%	46%	57%	71%	79%	100%
D	-1	5%					

2 A	5	24%	25%	29%	36%	50%	86%
B		26%	57%	50%	31%	12%	
C		45%	18%	21%	33%	38%	14%
D	-2	5%					

64-1 This is another example of a ♖ Endgame where the *strategic planning* is more appropriate than the *calculation* in order to make the right move. White is trying to win here, and his plan has two parts –

- Go forward with his ♖s supported by the ♔,
- Have the ♖ sacrificed for the ♖a at the last possible moment.

Black ♖ can't stop the ♖s alone, thus <A> is wrong. Black will try to keep his ♔ closer to the White ♖s, but what to do with Black ♖? Keeping it in front of the a-♖ () will not work, unless White blunders a trick (like ♖ check clearing the promotion square). It is usually preferable to keep the ♖ behind the passed ♖. If Black ♖ can support the a-♖ from behind (5 points for <C>), White ♖ would be forced to take a passive position on a1 blocking the ♖! In turn, active Black ♖ and Black ♔ together might be able to defend against White ♔ and ♖s.

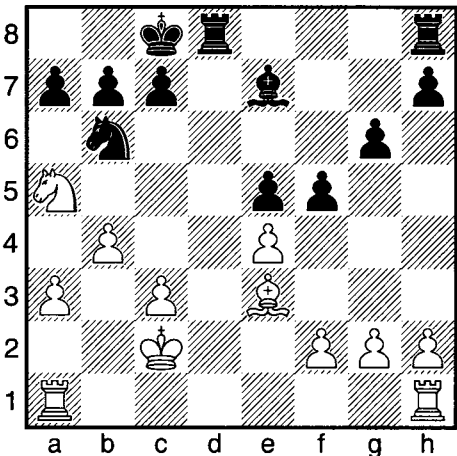
If you picked <D> (-1 point), how were you planning to stop Black ♖?

64-2 Except for an immediate blunder 1. ♖×b2?? (-2 points for <D>) all other moves look reasonable. But only one - 1. ♖e6+! (5 points for <A>) gives White good winning chances. After 1... ♔d7 White would be able to place the ♖ behind Black ♖ - 2. ♖a6. Else, after 1... ♔b5 covering the a6 2. ♖e1 and Black ♔ is a little further away from White ♖s.

A Draw is not far away after 1. ♖e1 (<C>) ♖a2 2. ♖a1 (to stop 2... ♖b1) ♔d7 or 1. ♖e3 () ♖b4+! 2. ♔g5 ♖a4 (♖ is behind ♖) 3. ♖e1 ♖a2 4. ♖a1 ♔d7. In either case, White can't expect much since his ♖ is passive in the corner.

Practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

Question #65



White to Move!

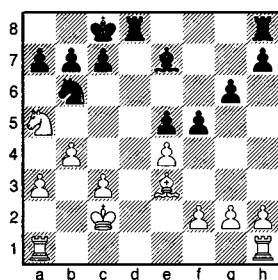
65 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Slightly Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Slightly Better
D	White is Significantly Better

65 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖a1–d1
B	1. ♖e4×f5
C	1. ♖f2–f3
D	1. ♔e3×b6

(65) Andersson,U - Franco,Z Buenos Aires, 1979



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		28%	12%	14%			
B	1	31%	27%	42%	25%	18%	11%
C	5	41%	50%	44%	75%	82%	89%
D			11%				

2 A		15%		7%			
B		25%	12%		8%		
C		25%	63%	64%	59%	55%	47%
D	5	35%	25%	29%	33%	45%	53%

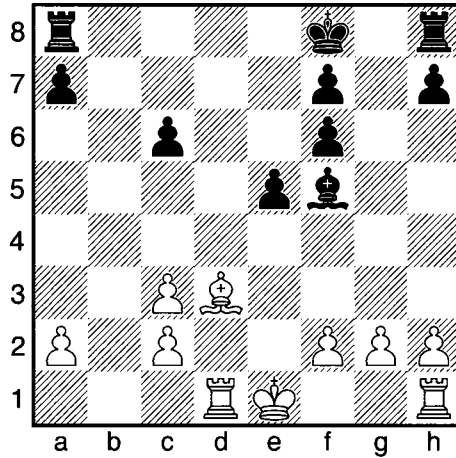
65-1 White has a small advantage here (5 points for <C>) mainly because of more space on the ♔-side, a “bad” Black ♙ and a potential target - the ♙e5. If you assessed the position as equal () focusing on the symmetrical ♙ structure and a balance in material, you get 1 point. White needs to be very assertive in his immediate actions, otherwise Black would be able to equalize.

65-2 White ♙ doesn't really have any good prospects and there is just one reason it is better than his Black counterpart – it can be traded at once. The best move is an immediate **1. ♙×b6!** (5 points for <D>) that insures an endgame with a small, but permanent advantage for White. In the game, after **1... ♙a×b6 2. ♖c4** Black played passive **2... ♙f6?!** allowing White to steadily increase his advantage after **3. ♙a4! ♙g7 4. ♖he1 ♖he8 5. ♙b5 ♙f4?! 6. ♙a5!** White went on to win 20 moves later. Active defense via **2... ♙×e4** was worth considering. However, after **3. ♖ae1!** (3. ♖he1? ♖hf8 4. ♖e2 ♙g5 and Black has no problems – Yermolinsky) ♖hf8 **4. ♖hf1** (Foygel) White intends to play ♖×e4, ♙f3, ♖1e1 or ♖d2–e4. Well placed ♖ and a better ♙ structure give an advantage to White.

The other choices produce even fewer chances to fight for an advantage - **1. ♙f3 ♖d7**, or **1. ♙×f5?! ♙×f5**, or **1. ♖ad1 ♖×d1 2. ♖×d1 ♖d8**. To learn more - practice the starting position against a friend or computer.

Never disregard an opportunity to trade.

Question #66



Black to Move!

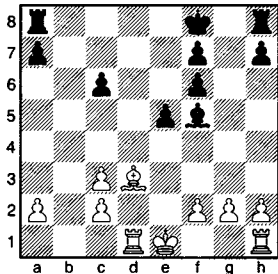
66 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

66 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖e5-e4
B	1...♙f5-g6
C	1...♙f5-e6
D	Both B and C are equally good

(66) Dvoretsky, M

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	31%	25%	50%	54%	90%	100%
B		29%	27%	43%	38%	10%	
C		35%	48%	7%	8%		
D	-1	5%					

2 A		25%	26%	21%			
B		46%	25%	21%	17%	11%	
C	5	17%	40%	43%	65%	70%	91%
D		12%	9%	15%	18%	19%	9%

66-1 With everything else being relatively balanced, a better ♖ structure gives small advantage to Black. He has good prospects of generating pressure against the weakened ♗-side ♖s. At the same time, Black can neutralize White's pressure in the center, specifically on the d-file, by placing ♕ on e7. Choice <A> earns you 5 points. There are no reasons to pick <D> - *White is winning* and you are penalized by 1 point if you did.

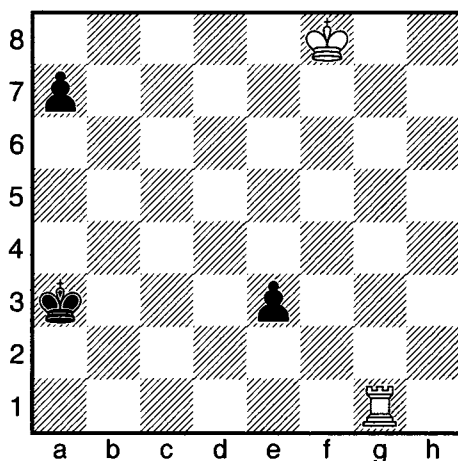
66-2 Black is facing an immediate problem – what to do about his ♙? Furthermore, he has to take into consideration the fact that White ♖d1 is ready to infiltrate his position. The best option is 1...♙e6! (5 points for <C>) saving the ♙ and guarding the 7th rank at once. After 2.♙e4 ♕e7! Black is in “a driver seat” with threats like ♖a8–b8–b2 and ♙×a2. If 3.♙×c6, then after 3...♖ac8 White ♖s on the ♗-side would start falling one by one.

Other options are less promising - 1...♙g6? () lets White ♖ to penetrate to the 7th rank and seize the initiative. After 2.♙×g6 ♖h×g6 3.♖d7, Black's improved ♖ structure on the ♗-side is a very small consolation for a dangerous White ♖.

Also dubious is 1...♖e4?! (<A>) as it unnecessarily weakens Black's ♖ structure and puts the e-♖ on the “wrong” color square where it eventually would limit Black's ♙. After 2.♙c4, White bishop is re-deployed to b3 where it will protect weak ♖s. Practice against a friend or computer.

Examine the ♖ structure carefully when making plans.

Question #67



White to Move!

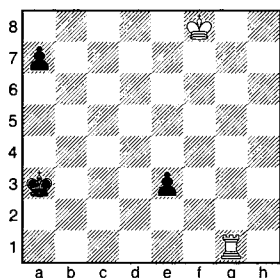
67 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Draw
D	White is Winning

67 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♔f8–e7
B	1. ♜g1–b1
C	1. ♜g1–e1
D	1. ♜g1–g2

(67) Sokov, V 1940



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	-1	14%		7%			
B		7%	17%				
C	1	16%	18%	26%	25%	27%	17%
D	5	63%	65%	67%	75%	73%	83%

2 A		18%	58%	50%	45%	62%	26%
B	5		7%	14%	23%	31%	62%
C		82%	35%	36%	32%	7%	12%
D	-1						

67-1 White ♖ can easily eliminate both ♙s, thus the expected outcome is either *Draw* or *Win for White*. It seems unlikely that White can win since his ♔ is so far from the actions. Also, White ♖ has to take care of the two ♙s. However, if you answered <C> - *Draw*, you only get 1 point. After the proper ♖ maneuvering, White ♔ can arrive just in time to help the ♖ and secure a victory. You get 5 points for <D>.

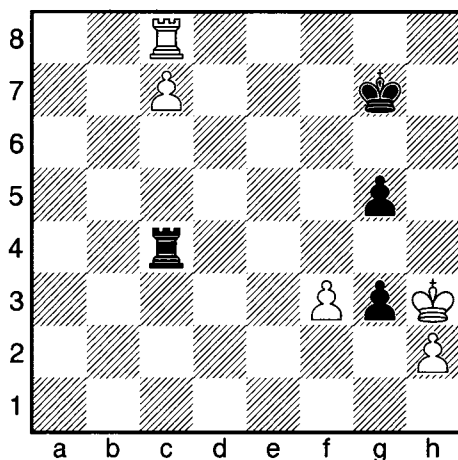
67-2 What are Black's defensive ideas? Black ♔ can't help the e-♙ (unless White makes a mistake), thus Black should concentrate his efforts on helping the advancement of the a-♙. Black ♔ will attempt to support the a-♙ and to try to block White ♔ from coming too close. One unexpected, but logical possibility for Black would be to play ♗b4 accomplishing both goals. For example, after the natural 1. ♗e7 (<A>) ♗b4! 2. ♖e1 (else 2... ♗c3 and 3... ♗d2) ♙a5 Black won't lose. Another "normal" move 1. ♖e1 (<C>) gets White nowhere after 1... ♙a5 2. ♖x e3 ♗b4! etc...

If you recognized Black's defensive maneuver, the otherwise shocking 1. ♖b1!! (5 points for) might seem obvious. The square b4 is no longer available for Black ♗. After 1... ♗a2 (1... ♙a5 2. ♗e7 ♙a4 3. ♗d6 ♗a2 4. ♖e1 transposes into the main line) 2. ♖e1 ♙a5 3. ♗e7, White ♔ arrives uncontested and helps the ♖ to win the game! For example 3... ♙a4 4. ♗d6 ♙a3 5. ♗c5 ♗b2 6. ♗b4 ♙a2 7. ♖e2+ ♗b1 (7... ♗c1!? 8. ♖xa2 ♗d1 9. ♗c3! ♙e2 10. ♖a1#) 8. ♗b3 ♙a1 ♖+ (8... ♙a1 ♖? 9. ♖e1#) 9. ♗c3 and Black is lost.

Finally, 1. ♖g2 (-1 point for <D>) doesn't accomplish anything.

Analyze all of the brief variations shown above in greater detail.

Question #68



White to Move!

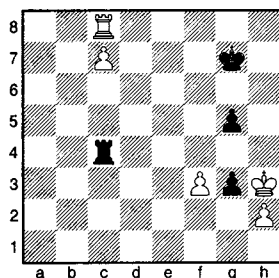
68 - I White's long-term plan is to...

A	Bring his ♔ to defend ♖c7 thus freeing his ♝.
B	Create another passed ♙ and rush it without the help of his ♔
C	Create another passed ♙ and rush it with the help of his ♔
D	Give up ♖c7 and use the ♔ and the ♝ to attack ♙g5

68 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♝c8-d8
B	1. ♔h3×g3
C	1. ♙h2×g3
D	1. ♝c8-g8+

(68) Haunin – Fridman, Leningrad 1962



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		28%	21%		8%		
B	5	15%	15%	14%	33%	90%	100%
C	1	45%	49%	57%	42%	10%	
D		12%	15%	29%	17%		

2 A	-1	8%					
B	5	9%	15%	17%	31%	77%	88%
C		78%	85%	83%	69%	23%	12%
D	-2	5%					

68-1 A good illustration of some basic ideas in the ♖ Endgame when the ♖ is supporting the ♙ on the 7th rank. With the ♖ positioned in front of the ♙, all of the ideas are **Tactical!**

1. White ♙ can't protect the ♙ and free the ♖ because there is no place for the ♙ to hide from the checks by the defending ♖.
2. Black ♖ can't leave the c-file, or else he loses after **1.♖g8+** and **2.♙c8♖**
3. Black ♙ is under "house arrest"; he is limited only to squares g7 and h7. Stepping on the 6th rank is punished by **1.♖..8+** and **2.♙c8♖**. Crossing the f-file is bad as well - **1...♙f7 2.♖h8! ♖xc7 3.♖h7+** and **4.♖xc7**

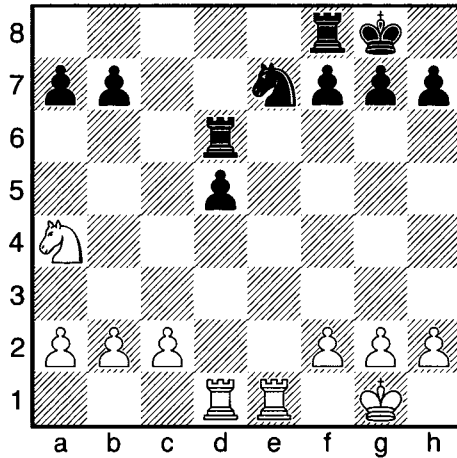
Now the choices - <A> is wrong (see #1). is correct, as White f-♙ can go untouched all the way. Neither Black ♖ (see #2), nor Black ♙ (see #3) will be able to stop it. Thus, the help of White ♙ is not necessary (1 point for <C>). Finally, giving up the c-♙ (<D>) is not a wise idea, as winning chances in ♖ Endgames with two ♙s vs. one ♙ on the same side are extremely small.

68-2 Blunders are penalized: **1.♖g8+??** (-2 points for <D>) **♙xg8** or **1.♖d8?** (-1 point for <A>) **♙xh2**. Also incorrect is a "natural" **1.♙xg3** (<C>), due to a surprising defense - **1...♙g4+!** After the forced **2.♙xg4**, White no longer has the much-needed ♙ on the f-file. The ♙s on the g-file, on the other hand, present no real threat. (Read more from any of the basic Endgame books)

The best is **1.♙xg3!** (5 points for). After **1...♙h7** (1...♖c3 2.♙g4) **2.♙h4! ♙xh4 3.♙h3** White f-♙ will begin its "voyage to greatness." **3...♙g7 4.♙f4 ♙h7** (4...♖xf4 5.♖g8+) **5.♙f5→♙f6→♙f7**, (Black ♙ can never touch the ♙ - see #3 above) and White wins.

Analyze in detail all of the lines mentioned (especially ♖ vs. ♖+2 ♙s on g-file).

Question #69



Black to Move!

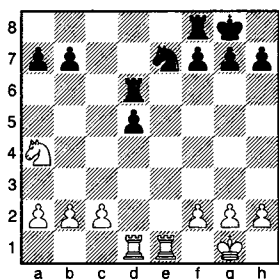
69 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

69 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖d6-e6
B	1...♖f8-e8
C	1...♞e7-c6
D	1...♞e7-g6

(69) Bakulin,A - Dvoretzky,M Moscow 1974

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		18%		7%			
B	5	53%	50%	62%	68%	100%	100%
C		19%	35%	31%	32%		
D	-1	10%	15%				

2 A	5	31%	25%	43%	28%	40%	48%
B	-1	10%	25%		8%		
C	2	29%	50%	50%	64%	60%	52%
D		30%		7%			

69-1 You don't need more than a brief evaluation to conclude that White is better here. He has a perfect Δ structure and more aggressive pieces. Black has no advantages and a permanent problem - an isolated d- Δ that is an easy target. You get 5 points for and 1 point penalty for <D>.

69-2 Black needs to address an immediate task – saving the Δ e7. In addition, he should also be looking for the best way to take care of his permanent weakness - the Δ on d5. After the natural 1... Δ c6 (2 points for <C>) White can continue 2. Δ c4 Δ d4 3. Δ c5 Δ b6 4. Δ d3 and maintain a small, but steady advantage. Weaker is 1... Δ g6 (<D>), sending the Δ to the Φ -side where it can't support the d- Δ . Even worse is 1... Δ e8? (-1 point for), volunteering into the unpleasant *pin* on the e-file.

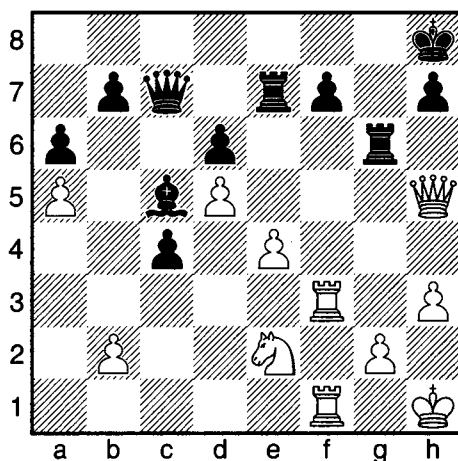
In the game, Dvoretzky played 1... Δ e6!? (5 points for <A>). It is surprising, as Black appears to be losing a Δ . After 2. Δ c5! Δ x e1 3. Δ x e1, the Δ and the Δ on b7 are both under attack. However, the game continued 3... Δ c8! 4. Δ x e7 (4. Δ x b7 Δ x c2! utilizing White's *back rank* weakness) Φ f8 5. Δ x b7 Δ x c5 6. Δ c3 Δ d4! 7. Φ f1 Δ x c3 8. Δ x c3 Δ x c3 9. Δ a7 Δ c2 and Black reached a known Δ endgame where a Draw is a likely outcome. If you saw it all you have exceptional calculation skills and strong knowledge of the Δ Endgames! Practice both 1... Δ c6 and 1... Δ e6 against a friend or computer.

Note 1: Excellent point by Yermolinsky - if Black is not satisfied with a Draw (i.e. due to the tournament situation or difference in ratings), he should play 1... Δ c6.

Note 2: Almost 20 years after playing the above game, Dvoretzky has published several new ideas that could make defending such Δ endgames (with 3 vs. 3 Δ s on the Φ -side and 1 extra Δ on the Ψ -side) even more difficult. Read the archives for 2003 on ChessCafe.com.

Albeit not as actively as the Opening theory, the Endgame theory is evolving too.

Question #70



White to Move!

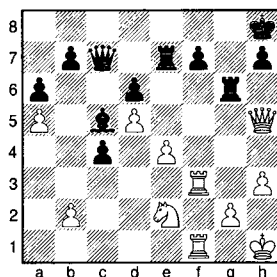
70 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

70 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖h5-h4
B	1. ♘e2-f4
C	1. ♘e2-g3
D	1. ♜f3-f4

(70) Smith, W - Barber, N USA, 2001



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	23%	30%	41%	48%	60%	88%
B		47%	45%	46%	52%	40%	12%
C		21%	25%	13%			
D		9%					

2 A		14%	25%	29%	23%		
B	5	18%	25%	30%	38%	68%	82%
C		35%	38%	24%	30%	20%	9%
D		33%	12%	17%	9%	12%	9%

70-1 Black's position is a mess! Bad ♖s, disorganized pieces, and the "lonely" ♔ - these are just a few predicaments that Black has to deal with. However, you don't get any points, unless you saw a clear way to knock the Black out. White is winning and you are awarded 5 points for <A>.

70-2 White has an advantage after every one of the listed moves, but the most convincing is 1. ♖f4! (5 points for). After that, no matter where the ♜g6 flees, White would play 2. ♘e6! destroying Black's defense. For example, if 1... ♜g7 then 2. ♘e6! ♖×e6 3. ♜f8+ ♜g8 and White wins materials after 4. ♜1f7 with the deadly threat of 5. ♜×h7#. Not safer is 1... ♜f6 since after 2. ♘e6! ♜×f3 3. ♜×f3 Black loses material as well. He is facing the threats ♘×c7 and ♜f6+, while 3... ♖×e6 can't be played due to 4. ♜f8#.

In a dynamic position, always seek the knockout punch!

Interim Report: Questions 61 - 70

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

Table 1-7 Score to Rating Conversion

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	860	55	1944
10	923	60	2034
15	976	65	2133
20	1067	70	2167
25	1189	75	2214
30	1298	80	2293
35	1385	85	2351
40	1505	90	2410
45	1623	95	2475
50	1793	100	2500

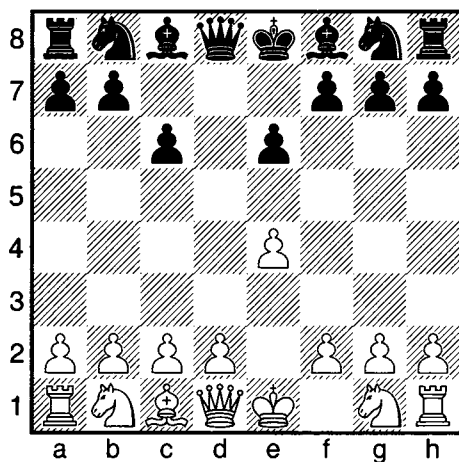
Table 2-7 Score to 50th Percentile Conversion

Rating Group	Score
Overall	50
2400+	93
2200-2400	80
1800-2200	58
1400-1800	49
1000-1400	41
Unrated-1000	30

Let's Take a Break:

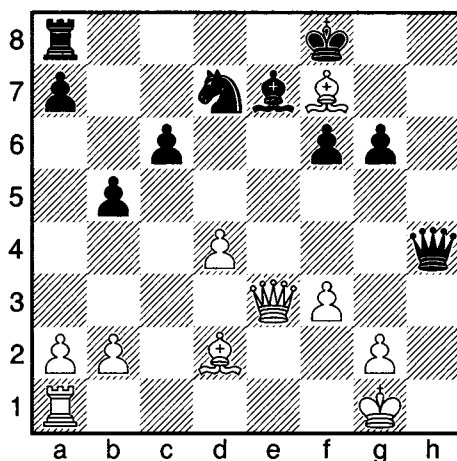


Q: Can you uncover the “new” opening variation in which, after 4 moves by each side, the following position arises?



A: I've just been told this line has already been played, so what you found is not technically a novelty. 1.♔e4 ♚e6 2.♘b5 ♜e7 3.♘xd7 ♜c6 4.♜e8 ♜xe8.

Question #71

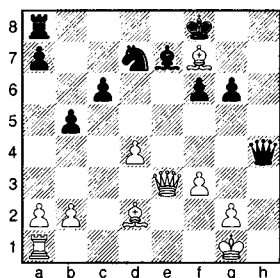


71 - I After 1...♙f8×f7

A	Black is Significantly Better
B	Dynamically Balanced / Equal
C	White is Slightly Better
D	White is Significantly Better / Winning

71 - II After 1...♙e7–c5

A	Black is Significantly Better
B	Dynamically Balanced / Equal
C	White is Slightly Better
D	White is Significantly Better / Winning

(71) Ehlvest, J - Timman, J *Sweden, 2001*Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	1	19%	20%	41%	32%	15%	11%
B	5	20%	14%	17%	30%	41%	59%
C	1	23%	17%	11%	6%	32%	22%
D		38%	49%	31%	32%	12%	8%

2 A		31%	29%	23%	22%		
B	2	11%	11%	21%	22%	36%	27%
C	5	16%	23%	37%	44%	52%	73%
D		42%	37%	19%	12%	12%	

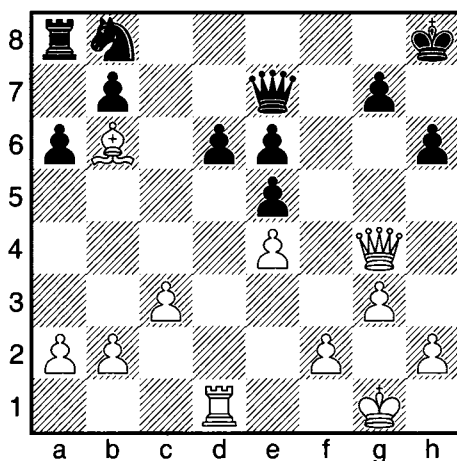
71-1 In the game, White was prepared to sacrifice his ♔ in order to get a very strong attack after 1...♙×f7 2.♖e1. It seems that Black could spoil White's plans using a tactical operation 2...♜×d4 3.♜×d4 ♔c5 pinning the ♜. However, those who expected Black to end up with a healthy extra ♖ and selected <A> get no points. Black's idea fails miserably after White's counterstrike 4.♖e7+! ♙×e7 (else 5.♜d7) 5.♔b4 pinning the ♔c5 (that is *pinning* the ♜). One *pin* too many, as far as Black is concerned!

Another attempt to keep the extra ♖ after 2...♖f5 is also very risky for Black. After 3.♜e6+ ♙e8 4.♜×c6! ♜b8 5.♜×g6+ ♙d8 6.♜g8+, White gets two ♖s and Black ♙ remains in great danger. For example, 6...♖f8 7.♜×e7! ♜d4+ (7...♜(♙)×e7 8.♔g5) 8.♖e3 and White is winning (Foygel).

Instead, Black should play 2...♖e5 and, after 3.♖×e5 ♜d8, both sides have dangerous threats and the position is *Dynamically Balanced* (5 points for). In fact, here is the safest line for both sides 4.♖×f6 ♔×f6 5.♔c3 ♔d4 6.♔×d4 ♜×d4 and a Draw is near.

71-2 Grandmaster Timman played - 1...♔c5 2.♖×c5 and only then 2...♙×f7. Black obtained the square e5 for his ♖. This excellent outpost is essential for a successful defense of the weak Black ♙ (ex. 3.♜f1 ♖e5). After 3.♔e1 White secured a safe endgame with a minimal advantage (5 points for <C>). Both sides seemed very happy that the "smoke cleared" without any serious damages. After 3...♜g5 4.♜×g5 ♖×g5 5.♔d2 ♔g4 6.♖×g4, the players agreed to a Draw.

Question #72



White to Move!

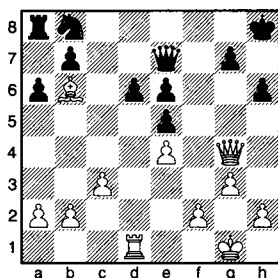
72 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Significantly Better
B	White is Slightly Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Slightly Better

72 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖b6-a5
B	1. ♜g4-h4
C	1. ♝d1-d2
D	1. ♠f2-f4

(72) Smyslov, V - Reshevsky, S USSR, 1948

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	5%	20%	38%	37%	47%	86%
B	1	54%	80%	45%	63%	53%	14%
C		22%		11%			
D	-1	19%		6%			

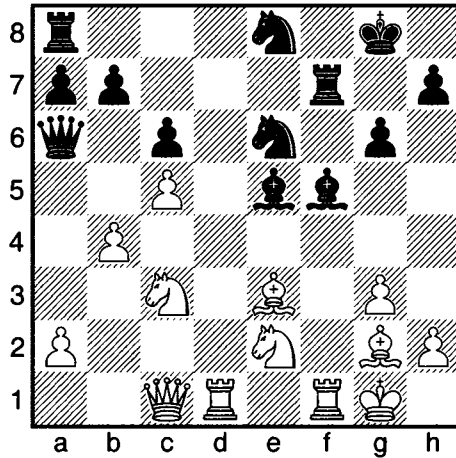
2 A		33%	23%	7%			
B	5	25%	35%	34%	58%	86%	92%
C		17%	22%	36%	42%	14%	8%
D		25%	20%	23%			

72-1 White's advantage is overwhelming (5 points for <A>). Lead in development, better placed pieces and Black's weakened Δ structure are among the main reasons for this assessment. If White could win the Δ d6, the whole "mass" in the center would collapse. White has a direct way to accomplish just that. You get 1 point if you thought White was only better.

72-2 Black Δ d6 is the optimal target, but trying to put more pressure on it isn't easy. For example, after 1. Δ a5 (<A>) or 1. Δ f4 (<D>) Black plays 1... Δ c6. After 1. Δ d2 (<C>, planning 2. Δ d1) Black has 1... Δ d7 2. Δ e3 Δ f6. What is left for White to try? Well, if you dismissed 1. Δ h4 () because you didn't like to damage your Δ s, you don't get the 5 points. The only piece that seems to be holding Black's position together is the Δ . The future World Champion Smyslov increased the pressure on the Δ d6 indirectly by attacking the key defender - Black Δ . After 1... Δ d7 (1... Δ h4 2. Δ h4 and 3. Δ d6) 2. Δ d8+! Δ x d8 3. Δ x d8 Δ d7 4. Δ c7 White won the crucial Δ . Soon thereafter the other central Black Δ s fell, and White easily converted his advantage into a victory.

Attacking the defender is often as effective as attacking the target directly.

Question #73



White to Move!

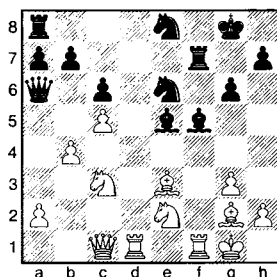
73 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Better

73 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖g3-g4
B	1. ♖a2-a4
C	1. ♖b4-b5
D	1. ♖f1xf5

(73) -Timman,J - Langeweg,K Amsterdam, 1971



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	-2						
B		42%	32%	21%	8%		
C		33%	31%	7%			
D	5	25%	37%	72%	92%	100%	100%

2 A		25%	25%	29%	42%	22%	31%
B		56%	57%	57%	17%	10%	
C	5	9%		7%	24%	50%	69%
D	-1	10%	18%	7%	17%	18%	

73-1 White has an advantage here. Here are the reasons:

- Better placed pieces,
- Control over the open d-file,
- More space on the ♖-side,
- Weakened position of Black ♘.

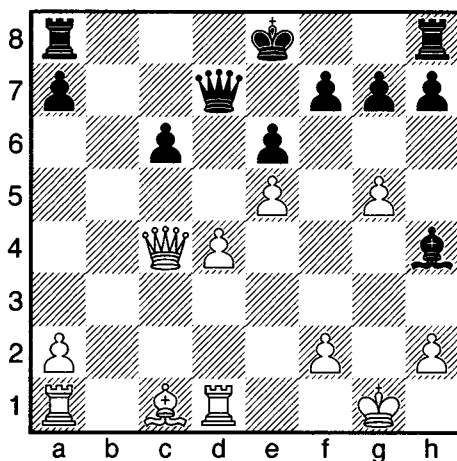
If you selected <D>, you get 5 points.

73-2 With a wide-open board full of pieces (none has been traded yet) both sides need to exercise caution in this very dynamic position. It is White to move and he should be looking to activate his ♙g2 and ♖d1. Ideas like ♙a4 - ♙b5 and ♙g4-♗xf7-♗d7+ come to mind. **Timman** found the most effective line, which started with an immediate **1.♙b5!** (5 points for <C>). After **1...♙xb5**, or else Black would have lost the ♙ on c6, came another blow - **2.♙g4!** Black crumbled under pressure - **2...♗xg4?** and, after **3.♗xf7 ♖xf7 4.♗d7+ ♖g7 5.♗xb7**, White won the ♗. Black resigned three moves later.

Instead of **2...♗xg4?**, Black could have offered stronger resistance after **2...♙b4**. Still, after **3.♗d5!**, White would be much better. For example, **3...♗xc3 4.♗xc3 ♙xc3 5.♙xf5 ♙xf5 6.♗xc3** etc...

When your opponent has "clumsy", uncoordinated pieces, look for tactical ways to exploit it.

Question #74



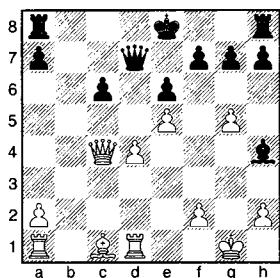
Black to Move!

74 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

74 - II What is the best move?

A	1...0-0
B	1...♖h7-h6
C	1...♔d7-d5
D	1...♜g7-g6

(74) Grischuk, A - Karpov, A *Linares, 2001*

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		27%	28%	16%		10%	
B	5	20%	27%	34%	37%	62%	92%
C		28%	24%	31%	20%	28%	8%
D		25%	21%	19%	43%		

2 A		32%	47%	7%			
B	5	11%	25%	29%	42%	77%	83%
C		48%	28%	64%	58%	23%	17%
D	-1	9%					

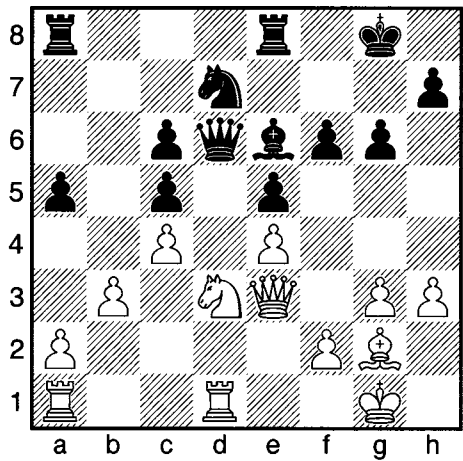
74-1 It is not easy to assess this *dynamic* position. On one hand is a compromised position of White ♔, while on the other hand is White's advantage in space and poor placement of Black ♙ on h4. The latter proves to be the most significant point. Thus White is better and 5 points is awarded for choice .

74-2 Black shouldn't miss the fact that the ♙ on h4 is in danger of being trapped. White's threats: an immediate 1.♖d5 and a slower 1.♞e2 (planning 2.♞g4) must be addressed. For example, after a weak 1...♗g6? (-1 point for <D>), White plays 2.♖d5 and Black ♙ is gone!

Now let's look at Black's other options. He is also in trouble after 1...0-0? (<A>) 2.♞e2! (also good is 2.♖d5) ♖f6 3.♙xf6 ♙xf6 4.♙h6 winning material. Also weak is 1...♞d5?! (<C>) 2.♞xd5 ♖cxd5 3.♖d3 ♖h6 (3...♖f6 4.♖gxf6 ♖xf6 5.♙h3 ♖g8+ 6.♙f1 ♖g4 7.♙e3! and 8.♖f3) and, after 4.♖xh6! (wrong is attractive 4.♙h3 due to 4...♖xg5 5.♙xg5? ♙xf2+) ♖xh6 5.♙h3 ♖g8+ 6.♙f1 ♙g5 7.♙xg5 ♖xg5 8.♙b1, White has big advantage.

Considering the circumstances, Karpov played the best option - 1...♖h6! (5 points for) and after 2.♖d5 ♖xg5 (2...♙xg5 3.♙xg5 ♖xg5 4.♖xc6 - the ♙ on d1 is protected and White has strong attack) 3.♞xc6 ♖c8 White was only a little better. Nevertheless, 18-year-old Grischuk, managed to outplay great ex-champion after another 27 moves.

Question #75



White to Move!

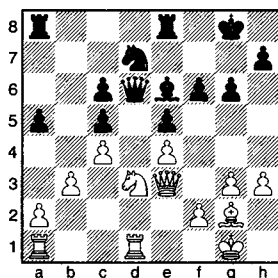
75 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Significantly Better
C	White is Slightly Better
D	Black is Slightly Better

75 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖d1–d2
B	1. ♜f2–f4
C	1. ♞d3–b2
D	1. ♔e3–h6

(75) Baburin,A - Stummer,A Budapest, 1992



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		17%	11%				
B	5	57%	74%	93%	100%	100%	100%
C		20%		7%			
D	-1	6%	15%				

2 A	1	68%	42%	7%	17%	19%	7%
B		11%	33%	29%	8%		10%
C	5	12%	25%	57%	75%	81%	83%
D		9%		7%			

75-1 The major factor to consider when assessing this position is Black's damaged Δ structure on the ♔ -side. Black's hopes are to get the ♞ to d4 and/or to undermine White Δ s after $\Delta a4$. However, White can effortlessly prevent both these ideas. While not yet winning, White certainly has a solid permanent advantage (5 points for).

75-2 White has several promising options, but only one move proves to be multi-purpose. After **1.♞b2!!** (5 points for <C>) White shifts the ♞ to a4 where it would continue pressuring the weak Δ on c5 as well as prevent Black's counter play via $\Delta a5$ –a4. Next, White will have a couple of promising ideas to choose from – a threat of penetration on the d-file (after doubling the ♜ s) or a pressure in the center and against the ♔ after $\Delta f2$ –f4.

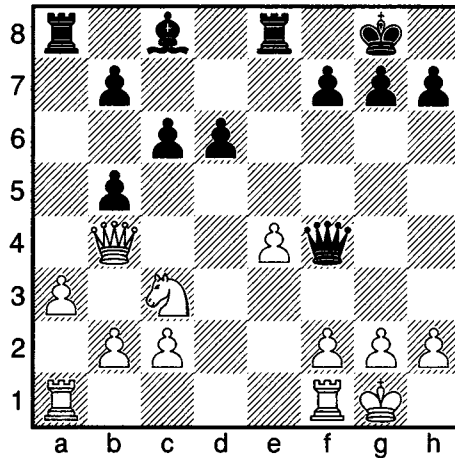
Of the remaining options, **1.♞d2** (1 point for <A>) seems the most reasonable since White begins to double the ♜ and Black can't play **1...♠a4** due to **2.♞b2** (discovered attack on the ♔) and **3.♞xa4**. However, after **1...♞e7**, White would have to address Black's idea ($\Delta a5$ –a4) and play **2.♞b2** anyway. If you selected <A> intending to play the ♞ to b2 later, give yourself 1 extra point (for a total of 2 points).

Questionable is **1.♠f4** () since after **1...♞d4 2.♞e1 ♠a4** Black is OK.

Aggressive **1.♞h6?!** (<D>) is out of line, since White's advantage is on ♔ -side and the ♞ has no support in attacking Black ♔ .

Ofentimes, a timely retreat is the optimal path to victory.

Question #76



Black to Move!

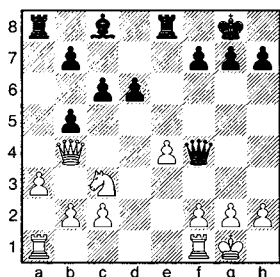
76 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

76 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖e8-e6
B	1...♖e8-d8
C	1...♙c8-g4
D	1...♙c8-e6

(76) Timman,J - Beliavsky,A Linares, 1993



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	30%	35%	64%	75%	78%	100%
B		41%	43%	15%	17%	22%	
C		29%	22%	21%	8%		
D							

2 A	5	32%	25%	43%	79%	88%	91%
B		17%	25%	14%			9%
C		40%	7%	14%	8%	5%	
D		11%	43%	29%	13%	7%	

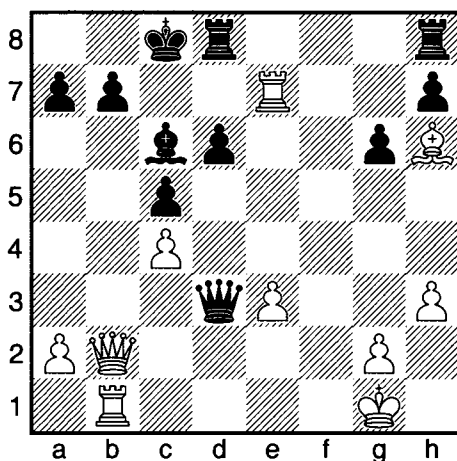
76-1 This position is not easy to evaluate. Both sides have pluses and minuses. White has slightly better \triangle structure and an easy target – the \triangle on d6. Black, on the other hand, has better placed pieces and good opportunities to attack White \triangle . In fact, while White \triangle and \triangle are stuck on the \triangle -side, Black can in no time mobilize all of his pieces to attack the \triangle . The bottom line - *Black is better* (5 points for <A>).

76-2 Black has initiative, which is a **temporary** advantage. He needs to act quickly; otherwise White will regroup and begin exploiting his **permanent** advantage - the better \triangle structure.

You get no points if you selected one of the “slow” options. After either **1... \triangle d8** () **2. \triangle ad1**, or **1... \triangle g4** (<C>) **2. \triangle f3**, or **1... \triangle e6** (<D>) **2. \triangle d4** White has a slight advantage. In the game, Black launched an immediate attack after the aggressive **1... \triangle e6!** (5 points for <A>). The game continued **2. \triangle ad1 \triangle h6 3. \triangle g3 \triangle f3 3. \triangle d3 \triangle h5 4. \triangle h4 \triangle g5!** and here White “cracked” under the pressure. Instead of the more prudent **5. \triangle g2** (5... \triangle xh4 6. \triangle h1), **Timman** played **5. \triangle xd6** and after **5... \triangle h3** had to give up the exchange to stop \triangle f3. After **6. \triangle e5 \triangle xd6 7. \triangle xd6 \triangle f3 8. \triangle e4 \triangle xe4 9. \triangle xe4 \triangle xf1 10. \triangle xf1 \triangle xh4 11. \triangle xf4 \triangle d8 12. \triangle e2 \triangle f5** Black convincingly converted his material advantage.

If you have initiative you must play aggressively.

Question #77



White to Move!

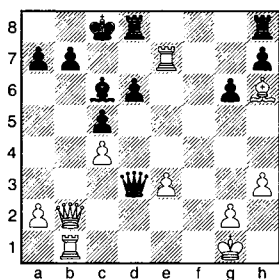
77 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	Every White piece is better placed than its Black counterpart.
B	White has more attacking pieces than Black
C	No one has advantage in material
D	Both A and B are correct

77 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖h6–g7
B	1. ♖b2×b7
C	1. ♜e7×b7
D	Both B and C are winning options

(77) Albur, L - Vigorito, D New York, 1993



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		12%	18%	7%	8%		
B	5	47%	69%	72%	79%	100%	100%
C	-1	8%					
D		33%	13%	21%	13%		

2 A							
B	5	24%	30%	27%	67%	82%	89%
C		22%	29%	59%	8%		
D		54%	41%	14%	25%	18%	11%

77-1 Use the process of elimination to tackle this question. First, exclude <A> since White ♔ on h6 is worse than his counterpart - the ♔c6. Next <D> is excluded, since it is linked to <A>. Also, <C> is wrong because Black has an extra ♖. This leaves us with , and it is indeed the correct answer which earns you 5 points. White has three pieces - the ♔ and a pair of ♖s attacking Black ♔. At the same time, Black has only two pieces - the ♔ and the ♔ attacking White ♔.

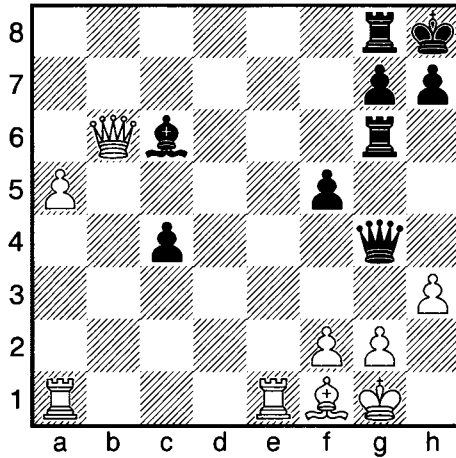
77-2 Three of the White's remaining four pieces are aimed at the ♔b7 which is the "key" to Black ♔'s position. With a *checkmate* at stake, one should expect a sacrifice on b7 at any moment. In fact, the current situation is as good as it gets and White should take the ♔s at once.

However, if you picked 1.♖×b7 (<C>), you are in for a shocker. Black prepared a nasty defense - 1...♔×b1+! After 2.♔×b1 ♔×b7 Black ♔ is relatively safe and a pair of ♖s might overpower White ♔, thus it is White who has to worry about the outcome.

The correct way to assault Black ♔ is via 1.♔×b7+! (5 points for). After 1...♔×b7 2.♖b×b7, Black couldn't prevent White's threats without losing his shirt. The game continued 2...♖d7 (2...♖f8 also stops ♖ec7#, but not fails due to 3.♖ec7+ ♔d8 4.♔g5+ and ♖b8#) 3.♖e×d7 ♔f5 4.♖dc7+ ♔d8 5.♖f7 and Black resigned.

Be on the lookout for opponent's counter-strikes, especially, when you start a combination that involves moves without a check.

Question #78



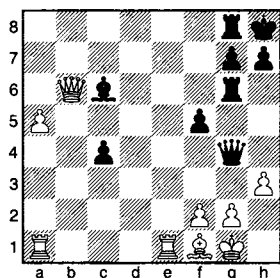
Black to Move!

78 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Better

78 - II What is the best move?

A	1... ♖c6×g2
B	1... ♜g4×h3
C	1... ♜g4-f3
D	Both B and C are winning

(78) Alekhine,A - Tartakower,S *Bad Pistyan, 1922*Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	72%	75%	93%	92%	100%	100%
B		11%	25%	7%			
C							
D		17%			8%		

2 A	-1	30%	18%				
B		28%	21%	7%			
C	5	7%	17%	86%	100%	100%	100%
D		35%	44%	7%			

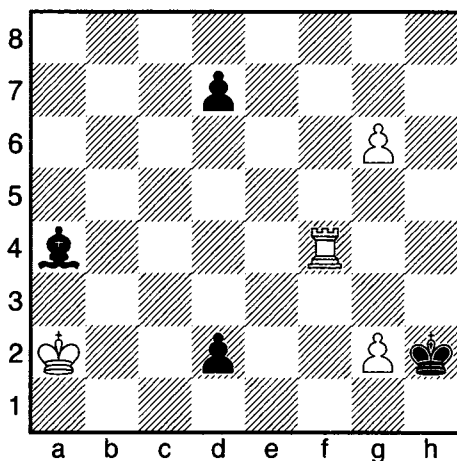
78-1 While the material is equal, Black's initiative on the ♖-side is very threatening. Consider that Black ♖, ♘, ♙ and f-♙, are all zeroing in on White ♔, who is defended only by the ♕s and the ♙. In fact, Black's attack was unstoppable and the game only lasted 1 more move! *Black is Winning* (5 points for <A>).

78-2 The great champion **Alekhine** set up a final trap, but talented grandmaster **Tartakower** avoided it! He played 1...♙f3! and White immediately resigned, since he could not stop the *checkmate* on g2 without losing his ♔. 5 points for <C>.

Bad is 1...♙×h3? () as the counter-strike 2.♙×c6! turns the tables. After 2...♙×c6 (2...♙×g2+ 3.♙×g2) 3.♙×h3, it is Black who is down a piece and completely lost.

Also, losing is 1...♙g2? (-1 point for <A>) since after direct 2.♙×g4 White wins "a ton" of material.

Question #79



White to Move!

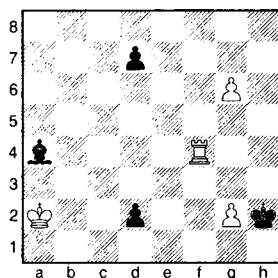
79 - I What result do you expect?

A	Black Wins
B	Draw
C	White Wins
D	Can go either way

79 - II What is the best move?

A	1. $\Delta g6-g7$
B	1. $\Xi f4-d4$
C	1. $\Xi f4-h4+$
D	1. $\Xi f4-f1$

(79) Kubbel, L 1909



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		15%	11%	10%			
B	1	17%	18%	8%	11%	12%	
C	5	68%	71%	82%	89%	88%	100%
D	-1						

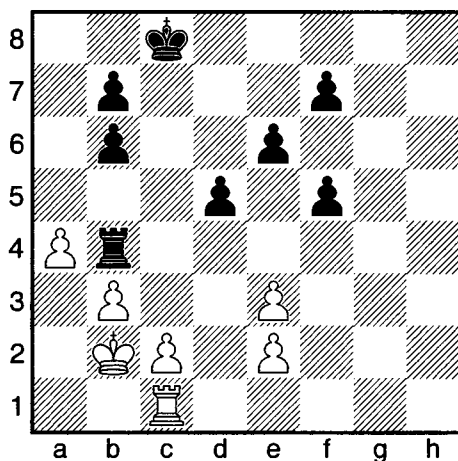
2 A		14%	23%	14%			
B	1	34%	41%	41%	42%	27%	
C	5	14%	21%	29%	58%	73%	100%
D		42%	15%	16%			

79-1 Currently, White has material advantage. However, it is not relevant for evaluation. Both sides are trying to promote ♖s, making the situation very unbalanced. Thus, an accurate *calculation* is required. If you did see a long variation leading to a Draw – good job, you get ... only 1 point. To get 5 points, you must do an excellent job and find how White could win in the end, by playing a correct first move.

79-2 White has a few options of dealing with the threat ♖d1♙. Ignoring it via 1.♖g7 (<A>) brings nothing but trouble after 1...♖d1♙ 2.♖g8♙ ♙d2+ and 3... ♙×f4. Trying to stop the promotion directly via 1.♖d4 () or 1.♖f1 (<D>) seems like a reasonable idea. After 1...♖d1♙ 2.♖×d1 ♙×d1 3.♖g7 ♙g4! 4.♖g8♙ ♙e6+ 5.♙×e6 ♖×e6 6.♖g4 ♖e5 6.♖g5 ♖e4 7.♖b3 ♖e3 8.♖c2 ♖g2!, the ♙s will appear simultaneously. Draw!

At first, the “in-between” 1.♖h4+ (5 points for <C>) doesn’t seem to change anything, since, after the ♖ moves, White will be facing the same problem (♖d1♙). However, indirectly this check has a huge impact! No matter where the ♖ goes Black’s tactical defensive resources (♙e6+ or the timely advance of the ♖e) would be interrupted. After 1...♖g3 (1...♖×g2) 2.♖d4 ♖d1♙ 3.♖×d1 ♙×d1 4.♖g7 ♙g4 5.♖g8♙ seems familiar, but... oops... the ♙ on g4 is now *pinned* and can’t go to e6! After 1...♖g1, hiding behind the ♖g, Black has 5...♙e6+ in the above line. But now the ♖ race has a different outcome because White ♖ is promoted with check after 6.♙×e6 ♖×e6 7.♖g5 ♖e4 8.♖g6 ♖e3 9.♖g7 ♖e2 10.♖g8♙+. The resulting position (♖ + ♙ vs. ♖ + d-♖ on 7th rank) is a basic theoretical *Endgame* that is lost for Black.

Question #80



White to Move!

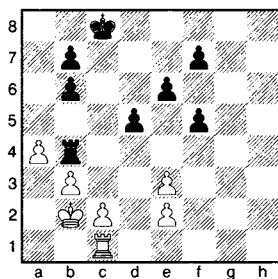
80 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Winning

80 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖c1-h1
B	1. ♔b2-c3
C	1. ♖c2-c3
D	1. ♖c2-c4

(80) Lasker, Em.

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	1	22%	7%	17%	27%	18%	12%
B		36%	27%	21%	6%	16%	18%
C		31%	55%	22%	13%		
D	5	11%	11%	40%	54%	66%	70%

2 A		27%	49%	29%	17%	40%	16%
B		39%	19%	21%	25%		14%
C		23%	12%	9%			
D	5	11%	20%	41%	58%	60%	70%

80-1 Black has a technically winning endgame (1 point for <A>) thanks to the extra ♖ and a flexible ♙ structure. There is just one small problem – the poor placement of Black ♗. And, while it looks like the trapped ♗ can escape, a more careful analysis shows that White can in fact capture it. *White is winning* (5 points for <D>).

80-2 If you recognized the idea of “apprehending” the misplaced Black ♗, then the move to consider first should be - **1.♖c4!** If it works, it will turn the situation 180 degrees. Due to the threats of ♕a3 or ♕c3, Black has to go along the following forced variation - **1... ♖xc4 2.♕c3 ♗xb3+ 3.♕xc4**. And now, even though Black ♗ appears to have plenty of room for maneuvers, White has at his disposal an explosive tactical idea - *discovered check*. Once White ♕ leaves the c-file, the ♗ on c1 will attack Black ♕. For example, **3... ♗a3 4.♕b4+** and **5.♕xa3**. The only try- **3... ♗b2** just postpones the inevitable. After **4.♕c3!** Black ♗ is lost and so is the game. Thus, aggressive **1.♖c4!** works (5 points for <D>)!

Other White's choices leave Black with excellent winning chances. For example, **1.♗h1** (<A>) **♗e4 2.♗h7 ♗xe3 3.♗xf7 ♗xe2** or **1.♕c3** () **♗e4 2.♕d3 ♖f4** or **1.♖c3** (<C>) **♗c4 2.♖c4** (what else?) **♖xc4 3.♗xc4+ ♗xc4 4.♖xc4 ♕c7** Black wins easily by getting his ♕ to c5 and advancing the ♖s via ♖e6–e5 and ♖f5–f4. For example, **5.♕c3 ♖e5 6.♕b4 ♕c6 7.♕b3 ♕c5 8.♕c3 ♖f4 9.♖xf4 ♖xf4 10. ♕d3** (10.♕b3 ♕d4) **♕b4** etc...

When you notice a misplaced piece, be on the lookout for tactical ideas.

Interim Report: Questions 71 - 80

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

Table 1-8 Score to Rating Conversion

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	868	55	1885
10	916	60	1981
15	966	65	2104
20	1070	70	2185
25	1181	75	2215
30	1314	80	2289
35	1473	85	2337
40	1563	90	2381
45	1629	95	2475
50	1719	100	2500

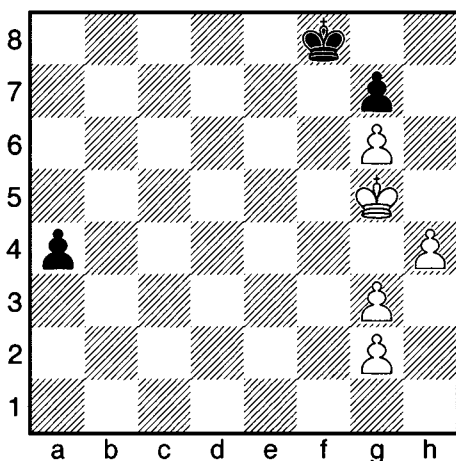
Table 2-8 Score to 50th Percentile Conversion

Rating Group	Score
Overall	51
2400+	93
2200-2400	77
1800-2200	63
1400-1800	53
1000-1400	42
Unrated-1000	25

Let's Take a Break:

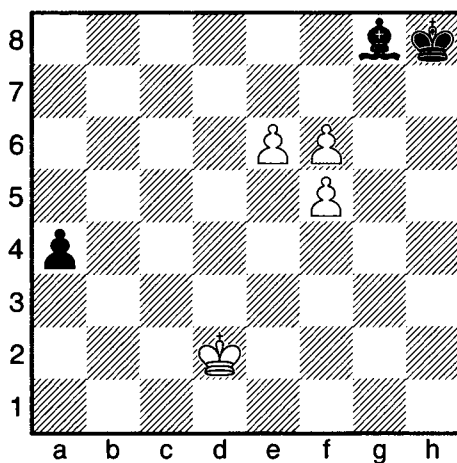


Q: It seems to me that White can't quite catch Black ♜. What do you think White should do?



A: White ♔ reminds me of a turtle here. First, it is too slow to catch Black ♜. And second, it is always ready to hide inside its shell. What "shell" you may ask? Well, take a look – 1. ♜g4 ♜a3 2. ♔h5 ♜a2 3. ♜g5 ♜a1 ♜4 ♜g4 and White is self-stalemated.

Question #81



White to Move!

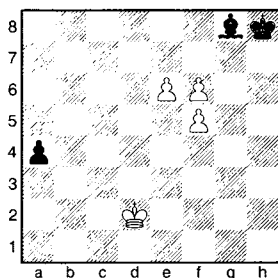
81 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	White is Winning
C	Draw
D	Both sides have winning chances

81 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♔d2-c3
B	1. ♔d2-c1
C	1. ♔d2-d1
D	1. ♜f6-f7

(81) Rossolimo, N



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	-1	4%					
B	5	46%	58%	93%	100%	100%	100%
C		40%	25%	7%			
D	-1	10%	17%				

2 A		50%	41%	66%	38%	8%	
B		29%	28%	20%	15%	40%	22%
C	5		6%	14%	47%	52%	78%
D	-1	21%	25%				

81-1 White is winning in this study (5 points for) due to the poor coordination of Black ♔ and ♚. Both are barely able to keep White ♖s from advancing and can be forced to remain in the corner permanently.

81-2 Draw is instant after **1.♖f7?** (-1 point for <D>) **1...♚xf7 2.♖xf7 ♕g7**. The remaining White's choices are all in line with the following plan: (a) to eliminate the a-♖; and next (b) to send the ♕ to support his ♖s.

To make the best choice, let's review Black's defensive options. There is not much to consider: ♚ can't leave g8 (else ♖e6-e7) and ♕ is stuck in the corner (♕h7<->♕h8, else ♖f6-f7). So, what is the problem? Well, there are 2 "bad" scenarios:

1. If White ♕ wanders onto the diagonal b1-h7 (c2, d3 etc.), then **1...♚h7 2.♖e7 ♚xf5+** and next **3...♚g6** stopping the ♖e7 just in time.
2. If White ♕ goes anywhere on the diagonal a2-g8, then, after **1...♚h7 2.♖e7** Black has **2...♚g8+**, next **3...♚f7, 4...♚e8, 5...♕g8, 6...♕f7...**

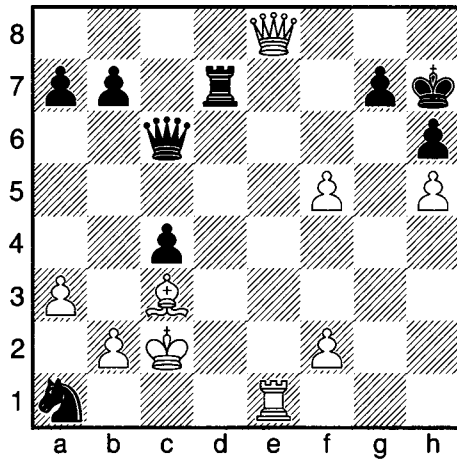
At some point, White ♕ will have to step onto one of the "bad" squares to get to the a-♖. He has to find a way to do that only when Black ♕ is on h7 and ♚h7 is not an option.

Now, with the whole strategy determined, the rest is a "piece of cake". Both **1.♕c3** (<A>) and **1.♕c1** () can be eliminated at once since after **1...♖a3**, White is in *zugzwang*. After **2.♕c2** (or 2.♕b3) **♚h7**, Black is OK.

The winning move is **1.♕d1!** (5 points for <C>) with this variation **1...♖a3 2.♕c1 ♕h7 3.♕b1 ♕h8 4.♕a1! ♖a2!** (the final trap) **5.♕b2! ♕h7 6.♕xa2! ♕g8 7.♕a3** and White ♕ marches victoriously to e7.

Study all of the variations in greater detail

Question #82



White to Move!

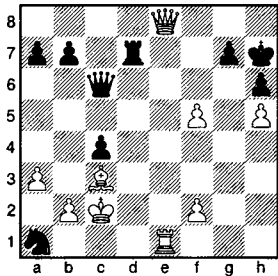
82 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

82 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖e1×a1
B	1. ♔c2-c1
C	1. ♔c2-b1
D	Both A and C are good options

(82) Ivell,N - Beliavsky,A London, 1985



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		29%	42%	22%	8%		
B	5	22%	17%	44%	50%	61%	84%
C		19%	10%	9%	6%	12%	
D		30%	31%	25%	36%	27%	16%

2 A	-1	10%	15%		6%	8%	
B	5	12%	21%	43%	52%	72%	87%
C		66%	64%	57%	42%	20%	13%
D	-2	12%					

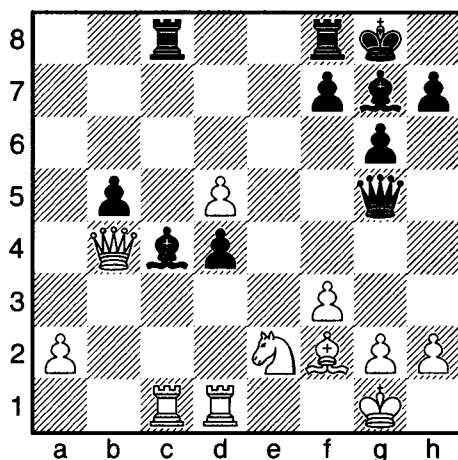
82-1 White has a very promising position (active pieces, threat of ♖g6+, etc.), but what to do about the check? Apparently, it is not easy to deal with. Black has a hidden threat - *discovered attack* against the ♖e8, after Black ♜ moves. Fortunately, White ♖ is protected at the moment by the ♜ on e1, and the ♜ should remain there or else... The best result for both sides is a *Draw* (5 points for).

82-2 White must watch out for the safety of the “royal couple”, or else the disaster could be instant. For example, the ♔ is checkmated after 1.♜×a1?? (-1 point for <A>) ♖a4+ 2.♜b1 ♜d1+ 3.♜a2 ♖b3#. The ♖’s compromised position is exposed in the following variation: 1.♜b1? () ♜d1+! 2.♜a2 (an interesting attempt is 2.♜xd1!? ♖×e8 3.♜g1 ♜g8! 4.♜xg7 ♜f8 5.♜xa1 ♖×h5 and only Black has winning chances here) ♖×e8 3.♜×e8 ♜b3 4.♜e1 ♜×e1 5.♜×e1 ♜d4 and Black has advantage.

Selecting the “double wrong” <D> carries a double penalty - 2 points!

Considering the above lines, the only safe move is 1.♜c1! (5 points for). Black should continue harassing White ♜ not allowing White would begin his actions. The game continued 1...♜b3+ 2.♜c2! (2.♜b1? ♜d1+) ♜a1+ and a Draw was agreed upon, since neither side could afford to avoid the repetition.

Question #83



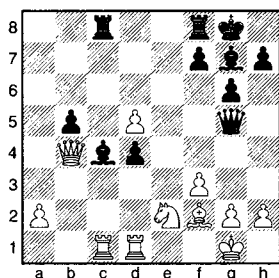
White to Move!

83 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

83 - II What is the best move?

A	1. Δ h2-h4
B	1. Δ f2-f4
C	1. ∇ e2xd4
D	1. Δ f2xd4

(83) Training Position inspired by Makogonov, V – Tolush, A (ch) Moscow 1944White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		11%					
B		61%	51%	36%	21%		
C	1	12%	24%	21%	17%	15%	7%
D	5	16%	25%	43%	62%	85%	93%

2 A	5	17%	21%	38%	49%	100%	100%
B		21%	12%	19%	6%		
C		52%	60%	43%	45%		
D	-1	10%	7%				

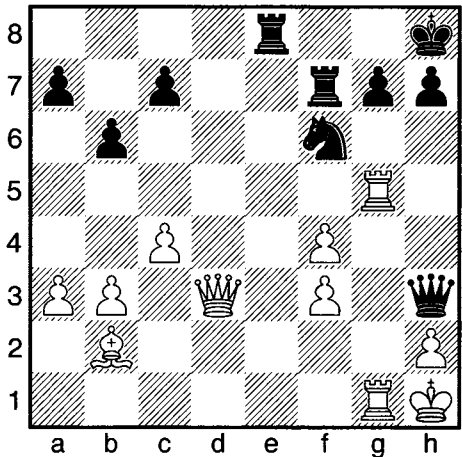
83-1 Black has an advantage in this dynamic position. First of all, having a pair of ♖s is an important plus for Black, since the board is “wide open”. In addition, he also has some surprising tactical threats that are not easy to deal with. You get 5 points for <D> and only 1 point for <C>.

83-2 You are penalized for dropping the ♖ after **1.♖×d4??** (-1 point for <D>) ♖×e2. Also erroneous is **1.♖×d4?** (<C>), but Black’s knockout punch is a little harder to see. After **1...♖f1!!** White ♖ on g2 and the ♖ on c1 are both under attack, and the latter must be given up to stop the *checkmate*. The end result - Black is winning the *exchange* after **2.♖×f1** (or 2.♖×f1) ♖×c1.

The final erroneous choice **1.♖f4** () is a weak attempt to defend the ♖ on c1 from the attack by the ♖. However, after **2...♖g4 2.♖×d4 ♖×d5 3.♖g3 ♖c4 4.♖b2 ♖8c8** Black is dominating.

Thus, White has to play **1.♖h4** (5 points for <A>) maintaining the material balance. Nevertheless, after **2...♖×d5 3.♖×d4 ♖8d8** Black holds a promising position due to the better ♖ structure and a strong pair of ♖s.

Question #84



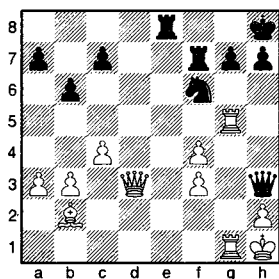
White to Move!

84 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Significantly Better
C	Black is Significantly Better
D	Black is Winning

84 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖b2×f6
B	1. ♖b2–e5
C	1. ♜g5×g7
D	Both B and C are equally good for White

(84) Uhlmann,W – Deli,I *Budapest, 1962*

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		51%	72%	93%	83%	72%	48%
B	5	30%	28%	7%	17%	28%	52%
C		8%					
D	-1	11%					

2 A		31%	21%	7%	7%	15%	
B	5	14%	16%	12%	11%	15%	40%
C		38%	63%	81%	72%	62%	60%
D	1	17%			10%	8%	

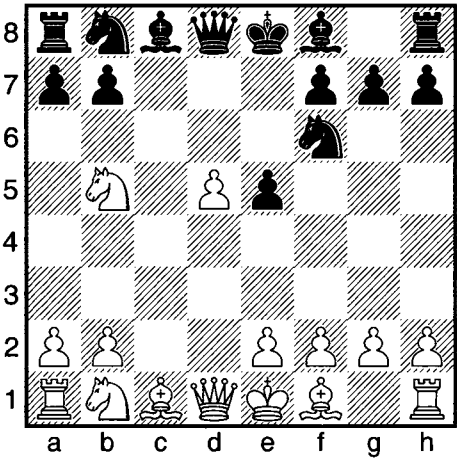
84-1 White has a great position here. An extra ♖, pressure on the g-file, and a strong ♕ are the factors that signify White's advantage. On top of that you may have found an interesting tactical shot. However, there is no forcing win just yet! Thus you get 5 points for choice . Black cannot realistically be winning here (-1 point for <D>). That is of course, unless White makes a major mistake, such as ... executing the above mentioned tactical idea.

84-2 Believe me, it is easy to make a mistake in this position, just look at the percentage distribution of answers. Explosive 1.♖xg7 (<C>) is a very attractive move, however it is losing! After 1...♖xg7 2.♕xf6 Black has a stunning counterstrike 2...♗g2+!! and, after 3.♖xg2 ♖e1+ 4.♖g1 ♖xg1#, White is checkmated. The *pinned* ♖g7 can't move, but nevertheless gladly protects the ♖g1. Thus both and <D> are incorrect.

Deciding between the two remaining choices should be based on the comparison of relative values of White ♕ and Black ♖. I see no need to give up the dangerous ♕ for the ♖ that has no "future" anyway. Thus 1.♕e5 (5 points for) is the right choice. White solidifies his position, blocks the e-file, and maintains all of his threats!

Even a pinned piece presents a danger to the ♖.

Question #85



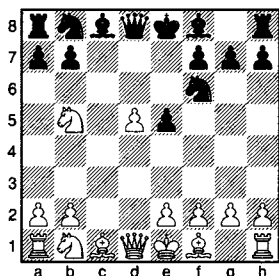
Black to Move!

85 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Slightly Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Slightly Better

85 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♔d8×d5
B	1...♞f6×d5
C	1...♞f8–c5
D	Both A and B are equally good for Black

(85) Training Position *Opening*Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		14%	17%				
B	5	21%	25%	29%	42%	51%	91%
C	1	27%	29%	57%	50%	24%	9%
D		38%	29%	14%	8%	25%	

2 A	-1	21%	18%				
B		50%	30%	21%	17%		
C	5	15%	41%	71%	83%	100%	100%
D	-2	14%	11%	8%			

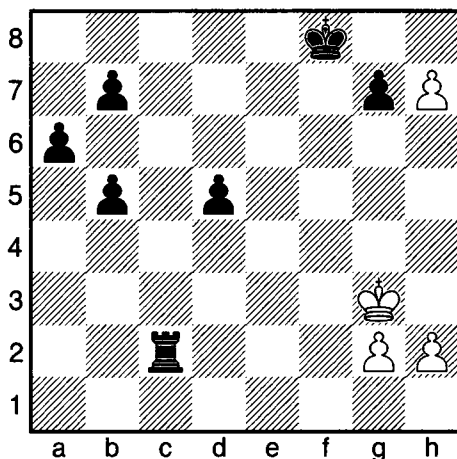
85-1 This position is from the English gambit. A common way to reach it is via the following move order **1.♘c4 ♘c5 2.♙f3 ♙f6 3.♘d4 ♘×d4 4.♙×d4 ♘e5 5.♙b5 ♘d5 6.♘×d5**. Black sacrificed a ♘ and has some compensation in the form of a slightly better development and attacking possibilities against the ♘ on d5 and the ♙ on b5. However, it is not clear whether or not this is a sufficient compensation for a ♘. White is slightly better and choice earns you 5 points.

85-2 This *Opening* offers Black some interesting active possibilities and it is also famous for more than a few *Opening* disasters. I hope you avoided **1...♚d5??** (-1 point for <A>) **2.♙c7+** winning the ♚.

Not much better is **1...♙×d5?** () due to **2.♚×d5! ♚×d5 3.♙c7+** and **4. ♙×d5** winning the ♙. If you missed both tactical ideas and selected <D>, you receive 2 points penalty.

After **1...♙c5** (5 points for <C>) **2.♙5c3 0-0** Black has some compensation for the ♘. In the Megabase 2002 (*ChessBase*) there are 785 games in which this variation was played. White is holding a slim advantage (53% success).

Question #86



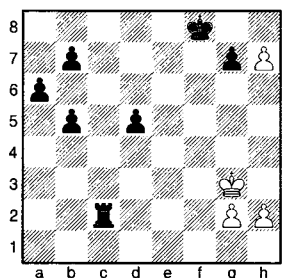
86 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Draw
C	White is Winning
D	Can go either way

86 - II Continue after 1... ♖c2-c3+

A	1. ♔g3-f2
B	1. ♔g3-f4
C	1. ♔g3-g4
D	Both A and C are equally good for White

(86) NN - Lasker,Em (simul) London 1914



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		15%	12%	7%			
B		18%	12%	14%	12%	8%	
C	5	67%	71%	79%	88%	92%	100%
D			5%				

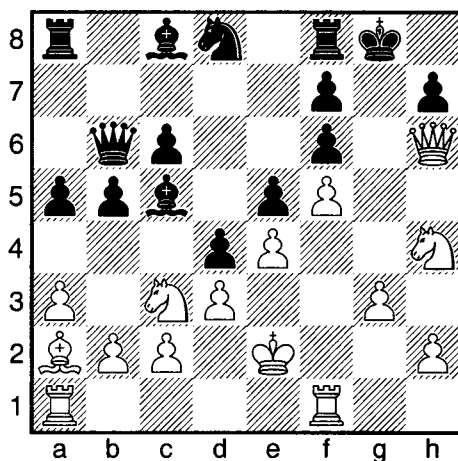
2 A	5	25%	30%	29%	42%	88%	89%
B	-1	25%	8%	14%			
C		25%	29%	50%	17%		
D	1	25%	33%	7%	41%	12%	11%

86-1 White is anxious to get the ♔ and to be able to dismantle Black's ♔-side ♖s. Can Black do anything to prevent this from happening? The answer is "No"! Black ♔ can't stop the ♖, and neither can the ♕. But ... he can try! *White is winning* (5 points for <C>), but he must be on guard! Even a small inaccuracy, such as a wrong ♕ move, could lead to a disaster.

86-2 Although Black is likely to lose, his last move 1...♔c3+ has some "poison" and shouldn't be taken lightly. Black has one last weapon in his arsenal - a tactical idea of advancing the ♖g7 with the check and clearing the path for Black ♕ to catch the White ♖ after ♕g7. Thus, White needs to be cautious and keep his ♕ out of reach of the ♖g7. After 2.♕f2 (5 points for <A>) ♔c2+ 3.♕e1 ♔xg2 (3...♔c1+ 4.♕d2) 4.♖h8♔+ White should be able to win. He has at least three distinct ideas – to win the ♔, to win the weak ♔-side ♖s, and, finally, to attack Black ♕.

Other White options fail miserably: after 1.♕f4? (-1 point for) White ♕ walks right into 1...♖g5+ and 2...♕g7. Also, losing is 2.♕g4? (<C>), due to 2...♔c4+ 3.♕g5 (or ♕g3) ♔h4!! and White ♕ is forced to step onto the "landmine" - 4.♕xh4. After 4...♖g5+ 5.♕xg5 ♕g7 Black is winning. You get 1 point for selecting <D>.

Question #87



White to Move!

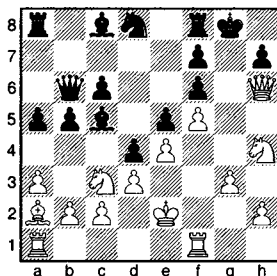
87 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	Both ♔s are in danger
B	White has extra material
C	Black has space advantage on the ♖-side
D	Both A and C are correct

87 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖c3–d5
B	1. ♖c3–a4
C	1. ♖c3–d1
D	1. ♖c3–b1

(87) Alexander, C- Marshall, F Cambridge, 1928



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		13%	6%	7%	8%		
B		8%	21%				
C	5	58%	61%	71%	83%	100%	100%
D	1	21%	12%	22%	9%		

2 A		34%	45%	7%	17%	15%	
B	5	5%		8%	17%	31%	73%
C	1	44%	28%	64%	50%	54%	27%
D		17%	27%	21%	16%		

87-1 The best way to answer this question is by using the *process of elimination*. Black ♔ is in great danger, but his counterpart is not, it is very safe in the center. This eliminates both <A> and <D> (1 point). Material is even, thus is eliminated. The advanced ♙s give Black advantage in space on the ♙-side. Thus <C> is correct (5 points).

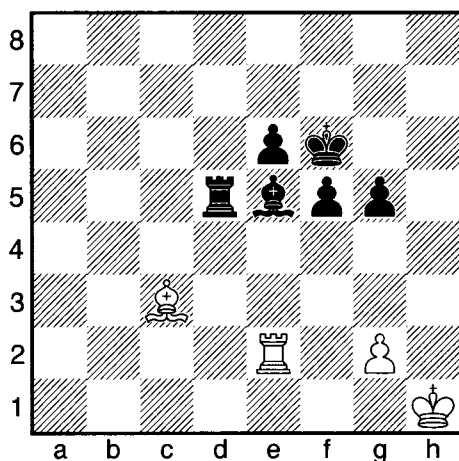
87-2 White could really turn up the heat on the Black ♔, which is hiding behind the damaged ♙s with no defending pieces nearby. The most forcing is a sacrifice 1. ♖f4, threatening ♗g4+ and ♙xf6#. After the necessary 1...♙xf4 2. ♙xf4 White has *almost* unstoppable mate via ♗g1. There is just one problem: after 2...♙xc3 Black ♙c5 attacks g1 thus preventing the mating ideas. If only the ♙c3 could vanish, then the defense via ♙xc3 would be eliminated and the mate would indeed be inevitable.

All of the 4 move-candidates involve moving the ♙c3. However, only one does it with a threat, thus not letting Black to regroup. After 1. ♙a4!! (5 points for), both the ♙ and the ♙ are attacked, and the threat can't be ignored. This *in-between move* keeps all White threats intact and eliminates Black's defense. After 1...♙xa4 (what else?) 2. ♖f4! ♙xf4 3. ♙xf4 the threat of mate 4. ♗g1# is truly unstoppable!

Also good, but not as devastating is 1. ♙d1 (1 point for <D>) with ideas ♙xf6, ♙g6, ♙f2-g4. Other choices are weak - 1. ♙b1 is slow, while the aggressive 1. ♙d5, after 1...♙xd5, opens a path for Black ♙ to protect the ♙ on f6 preventing the mating threats in the case of 2. ♖f4.

The correct in-between move should not alter the idea of a combination.

Question #88



White to Move!

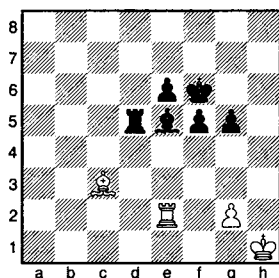
88 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Draw
C	White is Winning
D	Can go either way

88 - II Continue after 1. ♖e2×e5 ♜d5×e5 2. ♖g2-g3

A	2...♜f5-f4
B	2...♜g5-g4
C	2...♜f6-g6
D	2...♜f6-e7

(88) Training Position ♖ + ♘ + ♙ Endgame



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		39%	24%	31%			
B	5	27%	45%	43%	83%	100%	100%
C		23%	24%	26%	17%		
D		11%	7%				

2 A		41%	36%	41%	9%		
B		35%	28%	21%	10%		
C	5	16%	25%	31%	81%	100%	100%
D		18%	11%	7%			

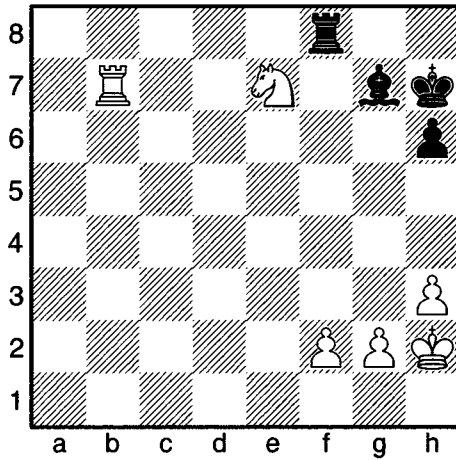
88-1 Black has significant material advantage (two extra ♙s) late in the *Endgame*. However, bad placement of the ♘ allows White not only to escape, but also to get winning chances. Yet, at the end, Black is able to defend his position. Thus, the best answer is a *Draw* (5 points for).

88-2 Have you ever faced a situation when at one moment you enjoyed a significant advantage and then, suddenly, were forced to defend? Were you able to shift into the defensive mode? Or did you continue attacking as if you still had an advantage? Oftentimes, the latter approach would result in a quick catastrophe. *If you were able to regroup, you could successfully defend the position, maybe even with minimal efforts.*

In this example, despite having significant advantage a little earlier, Black must now find the only move available, in order to survive! Defending the ♖ and hoping to get the ♘ for it, thus remaining two ♙s up, does not work. Moreover, it leads to a disaster. After either 2...♙f4? (<A>) 3.♙g4! or 2...♙g4? () 3.♙f2, Black is in *zugzwang* and must give up the ♖ for nothing. White's only ♙ is safe and, with extra ♘, he is winning.

What else can Black do? Well, since he can't get anything for the ♖ anyway, instead of defending it, Black should focus on eliminating the last White ♙. After 2...♙g6! (5 points for <C>) 3.♙xe5 ♙h5 Black ♙ will sneak into g4. After that White won't be able to stop the advance ♙f5-f4 eliminating the last White ♙! A *Draw* is inevitable.

Question #89



White to Move!

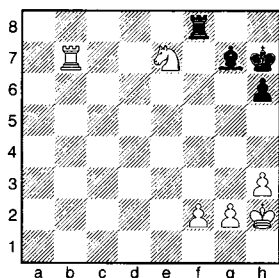
89 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Better
B	Nearly Equal
C	White is Better
D	White is Winning

89 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖f2-f3
B	1. ♘e7-d5
C	1. ♔h2-g1
D	1. ♖f2-f4

(89) Noomen,J – Corti,C 2000

White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1	A	10%	12%	9%			
	B	25%	19%	17%	10%	7%	
	C	1	32%	31%	28%	12%	7%
	D	5	33%	37%	43%	62%	81%

2	A		39%	63%	36%	8%	8%	
	B	1	31%	19%	35%	33%	7%	
	C	5	25%	18%	29%	59%	85%	100%
	D		5%					

89-1 White has two extra ♖s, which should be enough to win this *Endgame*. Although White has to deal with a couple of annoying threats, he still can hold on to this significant material advantage (5 points for <D>).

89-2 Black has the following intentions – either winning back one of the ♖s after 1...♖xf2 or *pinning* the ♘ after 1...♖f7. While the latter seems very dangerous due to the subsequent 2...♙f8 (2...♙f6), White shouldn't give up one of the two extra ♖s without a fight. With so few pieces and ♖s left, winning the ♖ would increase Black's chances dramatically.

After either 1.♖f4? (<D>) ♖xf4 or even 1.♘d5 (1 point for) ♖xf2 Black is likely to get a Draw. With only two White ♖s left, Black would get a bonus option – sacrificing the ♙ in order to eliminate both of them.

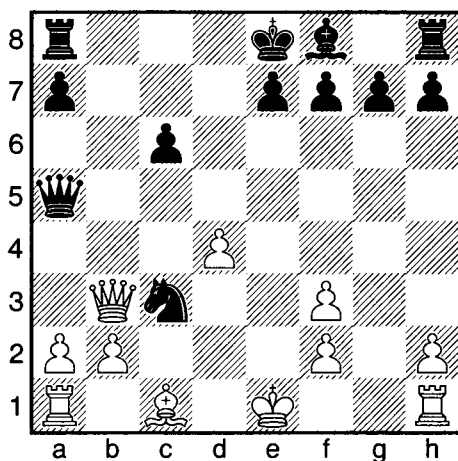
Practice these variations against a friend or computer.

On the other hand, how does one defend the ♖ while not getting in trouble with the *pin*? Certainly not by playing 1.♖f3? (<A>) ♖f7 2.♖a7 (planning to meet 2...♙f8(f6) with 3.♘c6; if 2.♖c7? ♙e5+, if 2.♖d7? then 2...♙f6! 3.♘d5 ♙e5+, and 4...♖xd7) since Black has 2...♙d4! 3.♖a4 ♙e5+ 4.♖f4 ♙xf4+ and a Draw is near.

What is so special about 1.♙g1 (<C>) and why is there 5 points reward for picking it? Well, by removing his ♖ from the b8-h2 diagonal, White is setting up a counterstrike – after 1...♖f7 (1...♙d4? 2. ♘f5+ and 3. ♘xd4) 2.♖d7 ♙f6 (or ♙f8) 3.♘d5! - resolving the *pin* and *trading down* into easily won endgame 3...♖xd7 4.♘xf6+ and 5.♘xd7. With White ♙ on h2, Black would have had 3...♙e5+ and only then 4...♖xd7.

Carefully consider all the other options before giving up your “loyal men”!

Question #90



White to Move!

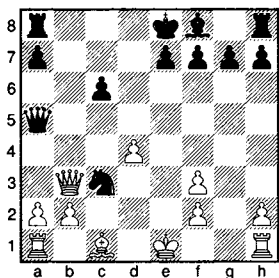
90 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

90 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖b2xc3
B	1. ♙b3xc3
C	1. ♙b3-b7
D	1. ♙c1-d2

(90) Nimzowitsch, A - Alekhine, A Bled, 1931



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A				24%	18%		53%
B		38%	52%	21%	47%	50%	
C		41%	18%	29%	16%		
D 5		21%	30%	26%	19%	50%	47%

2 A	5	25%	25%	29%	20%	52%	51%
B		17%	12%	7%	8%		17%
C 1		25%	17%	21%	47%	38%	32%
D		33%	46%	43%	25%	10%	

90-1 Black has a *static* advantage here due to White's damaged ♖ structure and exposed White ♔, which has no place to hide. However, White doesn't have to settle for a passive defense. In fact, White has an option to start a serious turmoil (1.♖b7!?) that leads to a completely different valuation. Too bad, White won't be happy with that valuation at all! In the end, White probably wished he picked a passive defense.

The bottom line: *Black is Better* - 5 points for <D>. Give yourself only 3 points, if you selected <D>, but missed White's attacking idea entirely.

90-2 Grandmaster Nimzowitsch went for an aggressive 1.♖b7!? (1 point for <C>). However, Alekhine responded brilliantly - 1...♘d5+!! 2.♙d2 ♖b6! Down a ♘, White had no choice but to take the ♖ - 3.♖xa8+, but after 3...♙d7, White ♖ was *trapped*. White had nothing better than to give up the ♙ in order to save the ♖. After 4.0-0 ♘c7 5.♙a5 ♘x a8 6.♙xb6 ♘xb6 Black went on to win convincingly.

If White played a passive, but solid 1.♙xc3 (5 points for <A>) getting the ♘ back and protecting the weak ♙d4, the outcome wouldn't have been so clear. After 1...♖d8 Black is better, but White has some defensive resources.

Less attractive are 1.♖xc3 (<A>) or 1.♙d2 (<C>) because, after 2...♖d5, White is stuck with an additional "headache"- the weak ♙ on d4.

Learn to defend patiently, but if you decide to burn your bridges, calculate precisely!

Interim Report: Questions 81 - 90

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

Table 1-9 *Score to Rating Conversion*

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	875	55	2037
10	949	60	2175
15	1016	65	2243
20	1115	70	2293
25	1206	75	2362
30	1368	80	2399
35	1472	85	2427
40	1619	90	2478
45	1760	95	2492
50	1921	100	2500

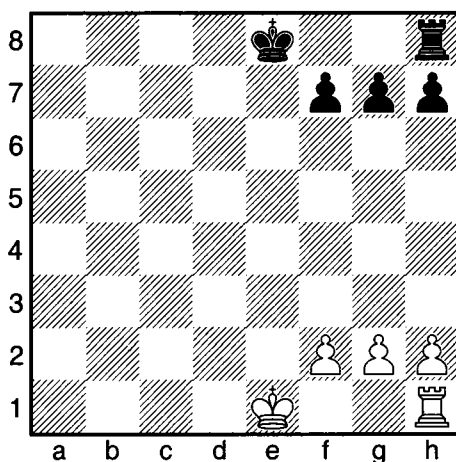
Table 2-9 *Score to 50th Percentile Conversion*

Rating Group	Score
Overall	46
2400+	92
2200-2400	68
1800-2200	53
1400-1800	43
1000-1400	36
Unrated-1000	25

Let's Take a Break:

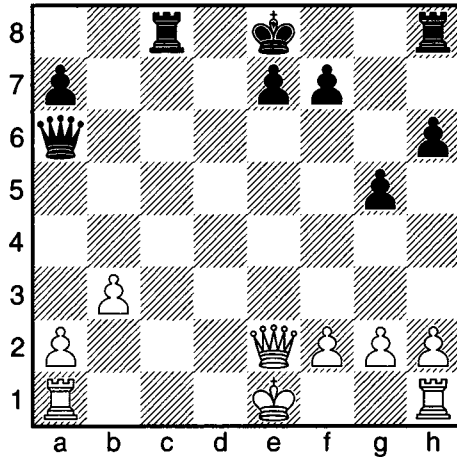


Q: Do you know the rules of castling? Let's check. Take a look at the diagram. I am not sure whose move it is, but will White be able to castle when it is his turn to move? What about Black?



A: Actually, to answer this question correctly you need to know whose move it is in the diagram. Only the side to move can castle. The other side would have either moved the ♔ or the ♚ on the prior move for the diagram in question to occur and thus can't castle.

Question #91



Black to Move!

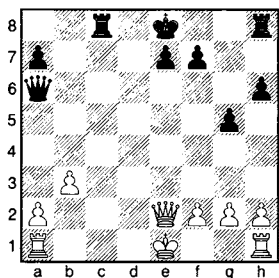
91 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Winning
B	Black is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	White is Better

91 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖a6-a5+
B	1...♖a6×e2+
C	1...♖a6-g6
D	Both A and C are equally good for Black

(91) Hodgson, J - Hillarp-Persson, T Sweden, 2000



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
		1000	1400	1800	2200	2400	2800
1 A		12%	31%	14%	12%		
B	1	43%	7%	40%	33%	48%	42%
C	5	27%	36%	32%	44%	52%	58%
D		18%	26%	14%	11%		

2 A	1	24%	10%	50%	33%	49%	43%
B	5	21%	20%	29%	43%	51%	57%
C		27%	29%	7%	13%		
D		28%	41%	14%	11%		

91-1 With material being equal, no one has a significant advantage in this *dynamic* position. Black is slightly better developed and can force White to lose the right to castle. Yet Black's \triangle structure is compromised and Black \triangle could become a target as well. Any future simplifications (such as trade of \triangle s or \triangle s) will also lead to a Draw. Position is nearly equal (5 points for <C>).

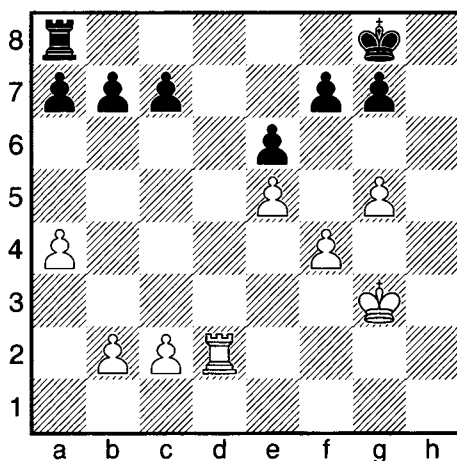
91-2 In the game Black played **1... \triangle a5+** (1 point for <A>), which was certainly a very attractive option. White had to move the \triangle , hence losing the right to *castle* (1. \triangle d2? \triangle e5+ and 2... \triangle a1+). However, White \triangle is very safe on f1 and the \triangle h1 can get out after \triangle h2-h4. In fact, the game continued **2. \triangle f1 0-0? 3. \triangle h4** and it was Black \triangle , who began to feel the heat. Better was **2... \triangle f5** (Donaldson), still after **3. \triangle e1**, White is not worse. In fact, after **3... \triangle e6**, he could challenge Black by either **4. \triangle g4!? \triangle d5 5. \triangle e4** or **4. \triangle e3 \triangle c2 5. \triangle a7**. You get only 1 point for <A>. Practice positions that arise against a friend or computer.

After **1... \triangle g6** () **2.0-0** Black doesn't have time for **2... \triangle c2** due to **3. \triangle b5+!**

Thus, the accurate **1... \triangle e2+!** is the way to go (5 points for). After **2. \triangle e2 \triangle c2+ 3. \triangle e3 0-0**, White should play **4. \triangle hd1** and **5. \triangle d2** neutralizing Black's initiative on the 2d rank. Draw is the most likely outcome.

Losing the right to castle is not a problem when the \triangle is not under assault and the \triangle can get into the battle.

Question #92



Black to Move!

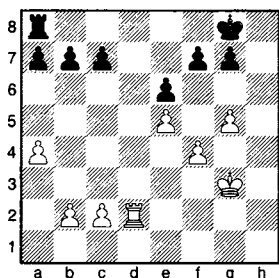
92 - I Evaluate the position

A	Black is Significantly Better
B	White is Significantly Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Can go either way

92 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♔g8-f8
B	1...♔g8-h7
C	1...♖a8-c8
D	1...♙g7-g6

(92) Training Position: ♚ Endgame

**Black to Move!**

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	-1		11%				
B		51%	44%	21%	17%		
C	5	41%	45%	79%	83%	100%	100%
D		8%					

2 A		52%	30%	37%	25%	11%	7%
B	-1	13%	12%				
C		28%	31%	27%	8%	11%	9%
D	5	7%	27%	36%	67%	78%	84%

92-1 With White ♚ controlling the open d-file, the question is whether or not Black can defend the 7th rank. The correct answer is “Yes” and therefore position is *Nearly Equal* (5 points for <C>). Even though Black can't prevent the penetration of White ♚ to d7, he is able to defend his position and, after making a couple of accurate moves, force the ♚ out.

92-2 Let's focus on the plans first. White's hopes are to install the ♚ on the 7th rank forcing Black pieces to defend and to find a way to break in with the ♜. Black intends to force the ♚ out after a patient maneuvering - ♚c8 (defending the ♜) and ♜f8-♜e8. White should attempt to extend the ♚'s range on the 7th rank in order to keep its superior position. Timely ♜g5-g6 could break Black ♜s and give the ♚ more room to operate.

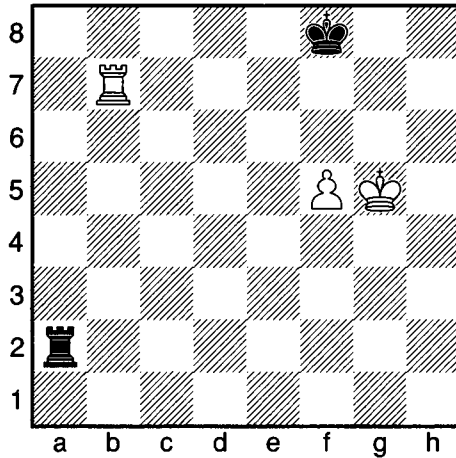
Now let's look at the move candidates. After 1...♜h7? (-1 point for <C>) 2.♚d7 Black loses a ♜. Although in line with Black's plan, neither 1...♜f8 (<A>) no 1...♚c8 (<C>) address White's idea. After 1...♜f8 2.♚d7 ♚c8 3.♜g6! ♜xg6 4.♜g4 or 1...♚c8 2.♜g6! ♜xg6 3.♚d7 White secures his ♚ on the 7th and has excellent winning chances.

The only move that tackles White threat is 1...♜g6 (5 point for <D>). After 2.♚d7 ♚c8 3.♜a5 (*) ♜f8 4.♜f3 (**) ♜e8 5.♚d1 ♚d8 a Draw is near.

Watch out for the ♚ on the 7th rank!

Note: White also has an ultra-risky idea of sacrificing two ♜s in order to keep the ♚ on the 7th rank and bring the ♜ via f4-g5-f6 (Yermolinsky). However, with two extra ♜s, Black is **at least** equal. By giving just one ♜ back he could neutralize White's initiative. For example: (*) 3.♜f5?! ♜gxf5 3.♜g6 ♜xg6 4.♜f4 ♚f8!? 5.♚xc7 (5.♚e7 ♜g5+!?) ♚f7 or (**) 4.♜f5 ♜gxf5 5.♜g6 ♜xg6 6.♜f4 ♚e8 7.♚xc7 ♚e7 8.♚c8+ ♜g7.

Question #93



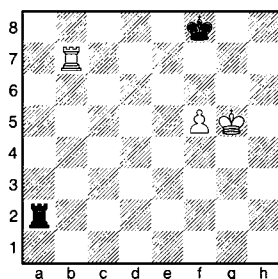
Black to Move!

93 - I What is the best move?

A	1...♖a2-g2+
B	1...♖a2-a6
C	1...♖a2-a8
D	1...♖a2-a5

93 - II Continue after 1... ♖a2-g2+ 2.♔g5-f6

A	2...♜f8-g8
B	2...♜f8-e8
C	2...♞g2-e2
D	2...♞g2-f2

(93) Training Position: ♚ Endgame**Black to Move!**

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		25%	7%	21%			
B	5	22%	47%	72%	92%	100%	100%
C		27%	18%				
D		26%	28%	7%	8%		

2 A	5	23%	14%	50%	58%	92%	100%
B		52%	46%	29%	34%	8%	
C	-1	25%	40%	7%	8%		
D	-2			14%			

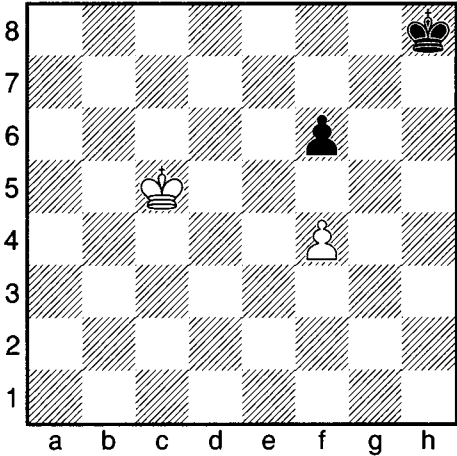
93-1 This is one of the key ♚ Endgame positions to remember. Black has great drawing chances since his ♚ is in front of the ♔. In order to drive Black ♚ away, White has to combine the efforts of the ♔ (controls the 7th) & the ♙ (attacks the ♚) & the ♖ (shields the ♚ from Black ♙). The plan is to play ♔g6 and ♙a8+. To prevent this, Black needs just one precise move - **1...♙a6!** (5 points for). In order to make a progress, White has to play **2.♖f6**, renewing the threat of ♔g6, but losing the ♔'s "hideout" on f6. After the accurate **2...♙a1!** White has to settle for a Draw. For example, **3.♔g6 ♙g1+ 4.♔f5** etc... Other ♙ moves are either losing (1...♙a5? or 1...♙a8?) or make Black's defense so much harder (1...♙g2+ see 93-2).

93-2 After the erroneous **1...♙g2+?** Black must find the precise response to **2.♔f6**. Bad are **2...♙f2?** (-2 points for <D>) **3.♙a8#** and **2...♙e2?** (-1 point for <C>) **3.♙b8+ ♙e8 4.♙x e8 ♔x e8 5.♔g7** and the ♔ goes through!

The remaining two ♔ moves are "look-alikes", but the difference is huge: **1...♔e8** () is losing, whereas **1...♔g8!** (5 points for <A>) Draws. The defending ♔ always goes towards the shorter side, so his ♙ has more room to make checks from the side. Either way White ♔ gets to f7, but with Black ♔ on the shorter side (after 1...♔g8 2.♙b8+ ♔h7), Black ♙ can continuously harass White ♔ from the long range (the a-file). If Black ♔ is on the longer side (after 1...♔e8 2.♙b8+ ♔d7), things change dramatically, as Black ♙ is not threatening nonstop checks (1...♙h7+ 2.♔g8 ending all checks).

Detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this book. Please review basic ♙ Endgames from one of the recommended Endgame manuals.

Question #94



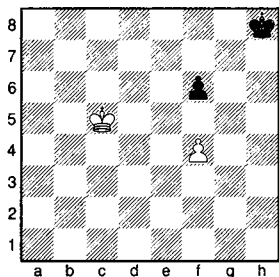
94 - I Which is correct if White is to move?

A	1. $\triangle f4-f5$ and Black can Draw
B	1. $\triangle f4-f5$ and White is Winning
C	1. $\textcircled{c}5-d6$ and Black can Draw
D	Both B and C are correct

94 - II Which is correct if Black is to move?

A	1... $\textcircled{h}8-g7$ and White is Winning
B	1... $\triangle f6-f5$ and White is Winning
C	1... $\textcircled{h}8-g7$ and Black can Draw
D	Both A and B are correct

(94) Training Position: ♖ Endgame



	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		8%	19%	11%			
B	1	57%	31%	43%	24%	12%	
C	1	10%	23%	7%	11%		
D	5	25%	27%	39%	65%	88%	100%

2 A	5	12%	17%	36%	67%	100%	100%
B		7%	22%	7%			
C		25%	37%	21%	25%		
D		56%	24%	36%	8%		

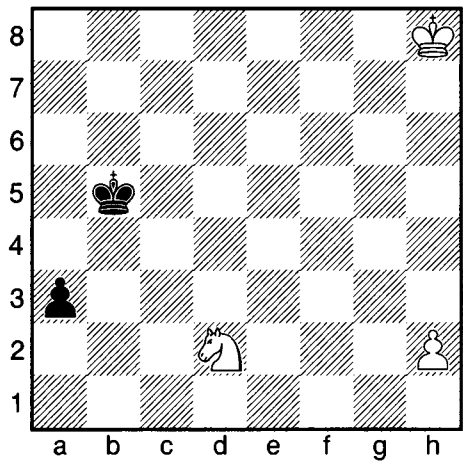
94-1 Another very important standard ♖ Endgame position. White has an advantage thanks to the better ♖. He will ultimately win Black ♖, but this might not be enough to win the game! *This position should be analyzed in greater detail using one of the Endgame manuals.* In short, after 1.♖f5!, White beats both the aggressive and the passive defenses. For example: 1...♖h7 (aggressive) 2.♖d6 ♖h6 3.♖e7! (3.♖e6?? ♖g5) ♖g5 4.♖e6 and Black is in *zugzwang* and loses. After 1...♖g7 (passive) 2.♖d6 ♖f7 3.♖d7 ♖g7 4.♖e7 ♖g8 5.♖xf6 ♖f8 (*opposition!* But it doesn't matter now, since White ♖ reached the 6th rank) 6.♖e6 ♖e8 7.♖f6 ♖f8 8.♖f7 White also wins. Thus <A> is incorrect and is correct (1 point).

After 1.♖d6 Black can escape by playing 1...♖f5! at once. For example: 2.♖e5 ♖g7 3.♖xf5 ♖f7 and Black gains the *opposition* (while White ♖ hasn't reached the 6th rank). Thus <C> is correct (1 point). You get 5 points for <D>.

94-2 Considering the above analysis, we can draw the correct conclusion when it is *Black to Move*. After the immediate 1...♖f5! Black just needs to move his ♖ near the square f7 waiting for White to take the ♖. Once that happens, Black plays ♖f7 securing the *opposition* and a Draw (is wrong and, thus <D> is wrong). Also, 1...♖g7 loses after 2.♖f5! since the counterattack fails once again 2...♖h6 3.♖d6! ♖h5! (3...♖g5? 4.♖e6) 4.♖e7! ♖g5 5.♖e6 and Black is in *zugzwang* and loses the ♖ and the game. <C> is wrong, while <A> is correct, earning you 5 points.

Sometimes, gaining an Opposition is more important than defending a ♖

Question #95



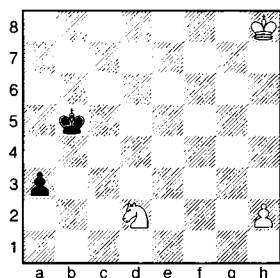
White to Move!

95 - I **What result do you expect?**

A	Black Wins
B	White Wins
C	Draw
D	Can go either way

95 - II **Which is the most accurate "if" statement?**

A	If Black ♔ was on d3, Black would Win
B	If Black ♕a3 was on b2 instead, White would Win
C	If Black ♕a3 was on c2 instead, White would Win
D	Both B and C are correct

(95) Training Position: ♔+♘+♙ vs. ♔+♙ *Endgame*White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		41%	17%	21%			
B	5	24%	29%	36%	61%	83%	100%
C		26%	32%	36%	39%	17%	
D	-1	9%	22%	7%			

2 A		67%	51%	36%	21%	11%	5%
B		11%	9%	14%	8%		
C	5	9%	15%	29%	53%	73%	95%
D		13%	25%	21%	18%	16%	

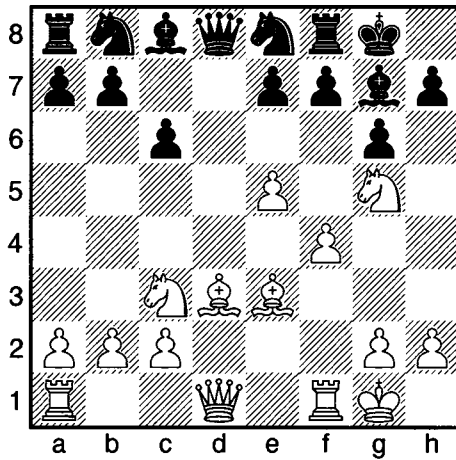
95-1 White would be very happy to give up his ♘ for the ♙ and run his h-♙ all the way. Typically, the ♘ has a hard time dealing with the ♙ on the ♖-file supported by the ♔. However, here the ♘ can pull one of his tricks at once. After **1.♘b1!**, Black can't preserve his ♙. After either **1...♙a2 2.♘c3+ ♘c4 3.♘xa2**, or **1...♙b4 2.♘xa3 ♙a3 3.♙g7** the successful march of the h-♙ is imminent. *White wins* (5 points for).

95-2 You have to read the choices very carefully before making your selection. With Black ♙ on d3 it is indeed Black who has the advantage, but White can Draw (<A> is wrong)! After **1.♘b3 ♙c2** (1...♙a2? 2.♘c1+ and 3.♘xa2) **2.♘a1! ♙b2 3.♙h4** by the time Black gets the ♔, White ♙ makes it to h7. Because the ♙ is on the **h-file**, this is a theoretical Draw (♔ vs. ♔+♙ on the 7th rank). *Analyze this line in greater detail.*

With Black ♙ on b2 instead of a3 (), Black is, once again, trying to Draw. In fact, he can by continuously harassing the ♘. For example: **1.♙h4 ♙b4 2.♙h5 ♙c3 3.♘b1+ ♙c2 4.♘a3+ ♙b3 5.♘b1 ♙c2 6.♘a3+** etc... Thus and, therefore, <D> are wrong.

Finally, with Black ♙ on c2, instead of a3 (<C>) the ♘ has sufficient space to avoid the threats from Black ♙ while continuously monitoring the square of promotion (c1). White is winning - **1.♘b3 ♙b4 2.♘c1 ♙c3 3.♙h4 ♙d2 4.♘a2! ♙d3 5.♙h5 ♙c4 6.♙h6 ♙b3** Black ♙ is finally able to attack the ♘, but...**7.♘c1+ ♙b2 8.♘e2!** and Black ♙ has to start his long and pointless march again. In the mean time, White will promote the ♙ and win (5 points for <C>).

Question #96



Black to Move!

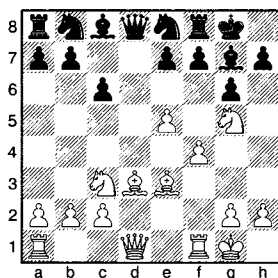
96 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

96 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖b8-d7
B	1...♖e8-c7
C	1...♙h7-h6
D	1...♙e7-e6

(96) Balakirskiy, E – Haldin, A USSR 1978



Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		28%	15%	7%	8%		
B	5	61%	70%	81%	92%	100%	100%
C		11%	15%	12%			
D	-1						

2 A		26%	13%				
B	5	24%	57%	68%	73%	93%	100%
C		37%	22%	25%	27%	7%	
D		13%	8%	7%			

96-1 *White is better* (5 points for). Superior development, advantage in space and threatening positions of the pieces are the key indicators. Black has no advantages and you get 1 point penalty for selecting <D>.

96-2 Black must defend very carefully against the aggressive White pieces and ♖s. Already, White has a couple of threats that can't be ignored. The **process of elimination** is the best way to find the right move for Black in this critical situation.

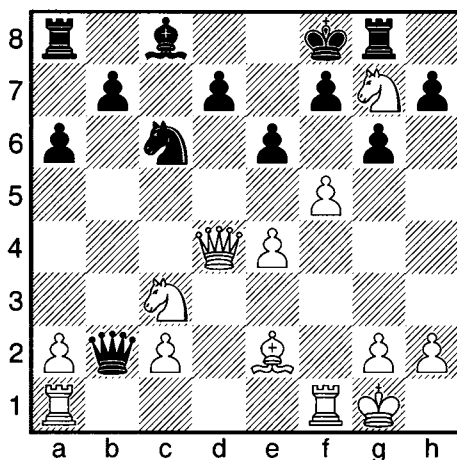
The setup - White ♔ on d1 vs. Black ♔ on d8 enables a combinational motif *discovered attack*, as soon as White ♘ moves. Is there a crushing ♘ move? You better believe it! White's threat is 1. ♘×h7 and if 1... ♙×h7 (else 2. ♘×f8, winning the *exchange*), then 2. ♘×g6+ and 3. ♔×d8.

Missing the threat is costly. After 1... ♖h6? (<C>) 2. ♘h7! Black is forced to give up the *exchange*. The same problem is after 1... ♖e6 (<D>).

A developing move 1... ♘d7 (<A>) takes care of the *discovered attack*, but ... allows a different blow - 2. ♖e6! Black's position is totally ruined.

The remaining option - 1... ♘c7 (5 points for) is the only move that solves Black's current problems. Not only is the square e6 under complete control (preventing White's ♖e5-e6), but also the ♔ is defended by the ♖f8. White is clearly better, but Black is still in the game.

Question #97



White to Move!

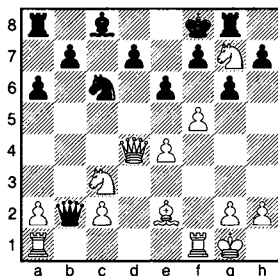
97 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	White is Better
C	Nearly Equal
D	Black is Better

97 - II What is the best move?

A	1. $\Delta f5 \times g6$
B	1. $\Delta f5 \times e6$
C	Both A and B lead to victory
D	Both A or B are weak moves

(97) Sabirov, V – Il'in, S USSR 1975



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	54%	64%	71%	92%	100%	100%
B		28%	20%	20%	8%		
C			5%				
D	-1	18%	11%	9%			

2 A	1	8%	25%	14%			5%
B	1	7%	13%	19%	33%	38%	11%
C	5	29%	45%	41%	50%	62%	84%
D		56%	17%	26%	17%		

97-1 White has a huge advantage in development, aggressive pieces and, don't forget, an extra ♖. Even if Black manages to regain the piece, his moves are "numbered." *White is winning* - 5 points for <A>.

97-2 White has several lucrative ideas –

- Checkmating Black ♖,
- Winning Black ♖ by
 - trapping after the direct ♖b1, or
 - via *discovered attack* after the ♖c3 moves with check.
- Preserving the extra ♖.

White's advantage is so overwhelming that he is winning after taking either one of the ♖s - **1.♖xg6** (1 point for <A>) or **1.♖xe6** (1 point for). In either case, Black can't take the ♖ due to ♖xf7#.

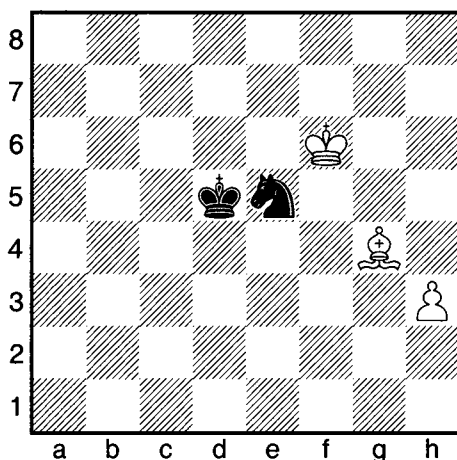
For example, after **1.♖xg6 ♖xg6** (1...♖xg7 2.♖d6+ ♖g8 [or 2...♖e8 3.♖xf7+ etc; 2...♖e7 3.♖xf7 threatening 4.♖xc7+] 3.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 4.♖xf7+ ♖f7 5.♖f1+ and a checkmate is coming) **2.♖xf7+!** ♖xf7 **3.♖f1+** ♖e7 **5.♖d5+** (*discovered attack*) and **6.♖xb2**.

Similarly, White wins the ♖ after **1.♖xe6 ♖xe6** (1...♖xa1 2.♖c5+ and 3.♖xa1) **2.♖xf7+** ♖xf7 **3.♖f1+** ♖e7 **5.♖d5+**.

You get 5 points for recognizing all White's ideas and selecting <C>.

Study the above-mentioned variations in greater detail.

Question #98



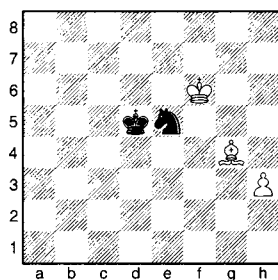
Black to Move!

98 - I Which is the most accurate statement?

A	If Black ♔ gets to g8, Black Draws
B	If White wins the ♖, and preserves the ♙, he Wins no matter where the ♔s are
C	Without the ♙, there are NO checkmating setups
D	Both <A> and <C> are accurate

98 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖e5×g4
B	1...♖e5-d3
C	1...♖e5-c4
D	1...♔d5-e4

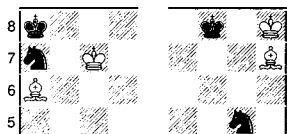
(98) Fischer, R – Taimanov, M *Vancouver 1971*

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	24%	54%	64%	79%	87%	93%
B		25%					
C		29%	25%	29%	7%		
D	1	22%	21%	7%	14%	13%	7%

2 A	-2	5%	7%				
B	5	37%	45%	64%	67%	84%	87%
C	-1	22%	7%	6%			
D		36%	41%	30%	33%	16%	13%

98-1 To get the full 5 points here you need to show creative thinking in addition to the knowledge of general theory. If his ♔ reaches the corner (g8-g7-h7-h8) Black can Draw even without the ♖, since the ♙ can't drive him away from the corner! Thus <A> is correct and is not. Even without the ♖, there are two mating setups with the ♔ stuck in the corner and the friendly piece "inconveniently" blocking his way out.



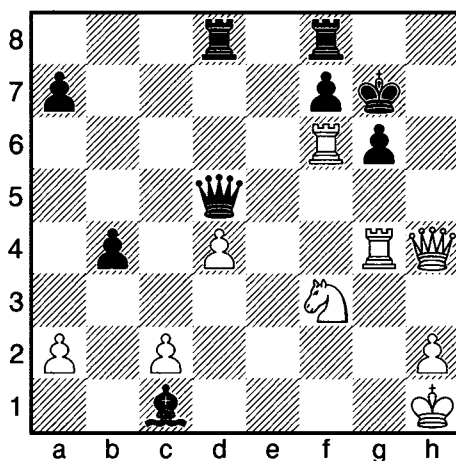
The side to move can *checkmate* in one after 1. ♙b7# and 1... ♖f7#. Thus <C> is incorrect. You get 5 points for picking <A> and 1 point for <D>.

98-2 The ♙ endgame is hopeless and you are penalized for selecting either 1... ♖xg4? (-2 points for <A>) 2. ♙xg4 ♙d6 3. ♙g5 or 1... ♖c4? (-1 point for <C>) 2. ♙e6+ ♙d4 3. ♙xc4. White is winning in either case.

In the game, Taimanov sent his ♔ the wrong way. After 1... ♙e4? (<D>) 2. ♙c8 Black couldn't stop advancement of the h-♙ and resigned shortly. The correct plan is to send Black ♔ to h8 via d6-e7 and to use the ♖ as a *decoy* to distract White ♙ from blocking this path. After 1... ♖d3! (5 points for) the ♖ is heading to f4 where it would prevent ♙h4-h5. After 2. ♙h4 (if 2. ♙f5 then 2... ♙d6!) ♖f4 3. ♙f5 ♙d6!, if White tries to chase the ♖ away, Black ♙ gets to h8 and secures a Draw!

When facing the ♙ on the ♖-file supported by the ♙ of "wrong" color, try to reach the safe corner at any cost

Question #99



Black to Move!

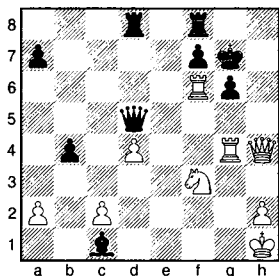
99 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	Nearly Equal
C	Black is Better
D	Black is Winning

99 - II What is the best move?

A	1...♖f8-h8
B	1...♜d8-e8
C	Both A and B are winning
D	Both A and B are weak moves

(99) Saunders, J – Winter, W London 1934

Black to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A		23%					
B		19%	23%	14%	19%		
C	1	36%	58%	43%	18%	37%	28%
D	5	22%	19%	43%	63%	63%	72%

2 A		25%	23%	50%	39%		
B	5	25%	27%	36%	42%	68%	76%
C	1	25%	14%	7%	19%	32%	24%
D		25%	36%	7%			

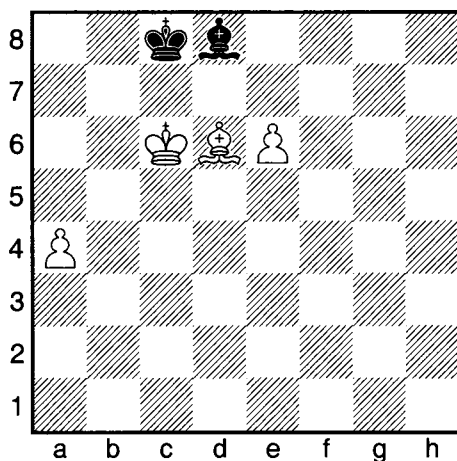
99-1 Even though White pieces are zeroing in on Black ♔, the decisive factors here are the weakness of White ♔ and the poor coordination of White pieces. Once White's threats are neutralized, Black has a decisive advantage. You get 1 point for <C> and 5 points for <D>.

99-2 The immediate 1...♖h8 (<A>) appears to be damaging enough to finish White at once. However, White comes back from the "dead" with a beautiful counterattack: 2.♜f×g6!+ ♜×g6 3.♞e7+ ♞f7 4.♜×g6+! After 4...♔×g6 5.♜e5+, White wins.

After a subtle 1...♜de8! (5 points for), White's strike is prevented (no more 3.♞e7+), Black ♔'s position is solidified and Black ♜ is transferred to the open file. At the same time, the cumbersome placement of White pieces becomes apparent. The shaky defensive chain: ♞h4 -> ♜f6 -> ♜f3 -> ♔h1 is about to be destroyed since White can't stop the (now!) damaging 2...♜h8!

Be on the alert! Often, to win a winning position is not an easy task!

Question #100



White to Move!

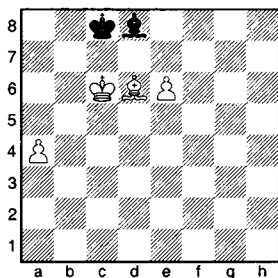
100 - I Evaluate the position

A	White is Winning
B	Draw if Black to move
C	Draw if Black ♔ was on a8
D	Both <A> and <C> are correct

100 - II What is the best move?

A	1. ♖a4-a5
B	1. ♖e6-e7
C	1. ♗d6-c7
D	Both B and C are equally good for White

(100) Training Position: ♔ + ♖s vs. ♚



White to Move!

	Score	0 - 1000	1000- 1400	1400- 1800	1800- 2200	2200- 2400	2400- 2800
1 A	5	25%	36%	55%	78%	92%	100%
B		6%	11%				
C		27%	21%	11%			
D	1	42%	32%	34%	22%	8%	

2 A		25%	33%	21%	33%		
B		14%	17%	8%			
C	5	25%	29%	57%	67%	100%	100%
D		36%	21%	14%			

100-1 Advantage of two ♖s is usually decisive in the *Endgames* with ♔s of the same color and this one is no exception. White is winning (5 points for <A>). Black does have two defensive ideas, but none works against an accurate White's play. Specifically, White needs to prevent stalemating tricks and not allow Black to sacrifice the ♚ for the e-♖, which would result in the drawn endgame with the "wrong" ♔ + ♖ on the ♖-file.

 is incorrect, since there is nothing Black could do even if it was his turn to move. Also incorrect is <C>, because Black can't stop the e-♖. Together, White ♔ and ♚ can block Black ♚ from controlling the e7, and the e-♖ can get through. For example (with Black ♔ on a8), 1.♔d7 ♚h4 2.♚e7 ♚e1 3.♚d8 ♚b4 4.♚c7 and 5.♚d6 neutralizing Black ♚. You get 1 point for <D>.

100-2 Avoiding Black's traps is not too complicated, but requires some precision. Black escapes in case of either of the two "impatient" ♖ advances. For example: 1.♖e7? (<A>) ♚xe7 2.♚xe7 ♔b8! reaching the safe corner and securing a Draw. Also, after 1.♖a5? () ♚xa5! 2.♖e7 ♚d8! White can't promote the ♖ into the ♔ or the ♚ due to the *stalemate*. Other promotions lead to a Draw as well, with the best attempt being 3.♖e8 ♚! hoping for 3...♚h4?? 4.♚c7 and 5.♚d7#. However, after 3...♚a5 4.♚d7+ ♔d8 a Draw is imminent.

Pretty move 1.♚c7! (5 points for <C>) clears the path for one of the ♖s. After 1...♚xc7 2.♖e7 or 1...♚h4 2.♖a5, White easily wins!

Interim Report: Questions 91 - 100

This is the last interim report if you are curious to see your results for the final 10 questions. You may want to skip it all together and proceed directly to the comprehensive reports based on all 100 questions.

If you want to review the instructions on how to use the Interim Report tables, please turn to pages 43-44.

Table 1-10 Score to Rating Conversion

Score	Rating	Score	Rating
5	822	55	1720
10	843	60	1901
15	951	65	1973
20	1032	70	2070
25	1107	75	2140
30	1186	80	2163
35	1356	85	2288
40	1453	90	2454
45	1523	95	2467
50	1648	100	2500

Table 2-10 Score to 50th Percentile Conversion

Rating Group	Score
Overall	58
2400+	90
2200-2400	75
1800-2200	65
1400-1800	54
1000-1400	42
Unrated-1000	28



You have completed the Exam!

Tables and Charts

Introduction

In this section, your results will be stored, summarized and evaluated. You will find out your:

- Percent of Success ratio;
- Percentile comparison with other players from every rating group;
- Estimated Rating - Overall and by 12 sub-categories;
- Estimated Title - Overall and by 12 sub-categories.

Each of the 100 diagrams was classified into more than one category.

The first thing you need to do is to record the number of points you scored for each diagram (maximum of 10) and then total them – all in **Table 1** (pages 246-248).

Next, you store your results into **Table 5** (p. 254) and calculate your *Percent of Success Ratio*.

After that, using **Table 2** (pp. 249-251), you estimate your rating.

Table 3 (p. 252) displays 50th, 75th and 90th *percentile* by rating group.

Table 4 (p. 253) has the Rating to Title conversion.

Finally, **Table 5** (p. 254) brings it all together. Please take your time when recording your points and doing the calculations. Check your work a couple of times.

To simplify the process of filling out these tables, especially completing **Table 1**, I have various forms and worksheets available. You can get all of them and a lot more on my website <http://www.ChessExam.com>

Instructions: How to Use the Tables

1. Proceed to **Table 1** (pp. 246-248) and record the scores you have earned for each of the questions 1 through 100 into the column labeled *Score*. Next, for each question copy your score into each column not **XXXX**.

Example:

Let's assume that you scored 7 points for Question #1 and 10 points for Question #2. You would record 7 points into the *Score* column next to Question #1. Then you would copy the same 7 points into *Endgame*, *Standard positions* and *Attack* columns – all for Question #1. All other cells for Question #1 are **XXXX**. Then you would proceed to Question #2 and store 10 into the columns *Score*, *Middlegame*, *Strategy*, *Counterattack* and *Sacrifice*.

2. When you finish recording your scores for all 100 questions, subtotal your points in each column and record the results below Question #100. I suggest checking your Totals a couple of times to ensure accuracy.
3. Proceed to **Table 5** (p. 254) and record the Total scores you have gotten from **Table 1** into the *Your Score* column. Calculate your % of Success by dividing *Your Score* over the *Maximum Score*.

Example:

Let's assume your Total score in **Table 1**, column *Tactics* is 235. You enter 235 into the Table 5, row *Tactics*, column *You Score*. Next you calculate the ratio $235 / 350$ (*Maximum Score* for *Tactics*) = 0.67 or 67%. Store this value into the column % Success, row *Tactics*. Always round it up to the nearest 1%.

4. Proceed to **Table 2** (pages 249-251) where you will convert your % of Success values from **Table 5** (for each of the 12 sub-categories and overall) into ratings. If your score falls between the points in the table, use approximation or basic interpolation. Record your ratings in the spaces below each column in **Table 2** and also in **Table 5**, column *Rating*.

Example:

Let's assume your % of Success for *Tactics* is 67% (**Table 5**). Now you go to **Table 2**, locate the closest % value in the column *Tactics* and identify corresponding rating, which happens to be approximately 2000 (between 1977 for 66% and 2035 for 69%). Or, by interpolating, $2003 = (1977 + (2050 - 1977) * (67 - 66) / (69 - 66))$

5. Proceed to **Table 3** (p. 252) to see the summary of the percentiles. This is a special statistical analysis that helps you see what 50%, 75% and 95% of the players, by rating bucket, scored for each subject and overall. This gives you benchmarks to compare your actual *% of Success* for each sub-category from **Table 5** to the results of others and see what percentile you belong to.

Example:

Once again, let's assume your *% of Success* for *Tactics* is 67%. Now, if you want to compare your score to the results of the players rated 1800 – 2200, you would see that you are definitely better than 50% of them, but 2% short of being better than 75% of them. At the same time, you can see that you are better than 95% of the players rated 1400 – 1800. You are not even close to being better than 50% of the players rated 2200-2400 as it requires to score 75% or better.

6. Using the ratings you calculated in **Table 2**, get your titles for each category and overall from **Table 4** (p. 253). This table is an estimate of the conversion table used in the United States, and it very closely resembles the FIDE International format. Record your titles in **Table 5**, column *Title*.

Example:

Let's assume your Score for *Tactics* is 235 and you calculated 2003 to be your rating, then your title is **Expert** (from **Table 4**). Store this into the column *Title*, row *Tactics*.

7. Upon completion of **Table 5**, take a look at your results. Identify your overall level, and then see what your strengths and weaknesses are by comparing ratings for the 12 sub-categories. You are now ready to proceed to the next chapter – *Training Tips and Recommendations*, where you will find out how to improve.

Table 1

	Score	Endgame	Middle game	Opening	Calculation	Standard Positions	Strategy	Tactics	Threat	Attack	Counter attack	Defense	Sacrifice
1			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
2		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	
3		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
4			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
5			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
6		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
7		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
8		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
9		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
10			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX		XXXX	XXXX
11		XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	
12			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
13			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX	XXXX		
14			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
15			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
16		XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
17		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
18			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
19			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
20			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
21		XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	
22			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	
23		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
24		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
25		XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX
26			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX	XXXX		
27		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
28		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
29		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
30		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
31			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
32		XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
33		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX				XXXX	XXXX	
34		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
35			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX

Table 1 (cont.)

	Score	Endgame	Middle game	Opening	Calculation	Standard Positions	Strategy	Tactics	Threat	Attack	Counter attack	Defense	Sacrifice
36		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
37			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
38			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
39			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
40		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX		XXXX	
41			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX		XXXX	
42			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
43			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
44		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
45			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		
46			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		
47			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
48			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
49		XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
50			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
51		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
52		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	
53			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
54		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX		XXXX	
55		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
56			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
57		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
58			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
59			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	
60			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
61			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
62			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
63			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX
64			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
65		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
66		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
67			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
68			XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
69			XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XXXX		
70		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX		XXXX		XXXX	XXXX	

Table 1 (cont.)[illegible]

Table 2

Overall		Attack		Counterattack		Defense	
%	Rating	%	Rating	%	Rating	%	Rating
3%	815	3%	817	3%	816	3%	815
6%	830	6%	833	6%	832	6%	830
9%	845	9%	850	9%	848	9%	845
12%	860	12%	867	12%	864	12%	860
15%	875	15%	883	15%	879	15%	875
18%	891	18%	900	18%	895	18%	890
21%	910	21%	920	21%	910	21%	920
24%	932	24%	932	24%	942	24%	942
27%	962	27%	950	27%	1015	27%	974
30%	984	30%	974	30%	1060	30%	984
33%	1000	33%	1000	33%	1176	33%	1000
36%	1060	36%	1048	36%	1253	36%	1139
39%	1171	39%	1102	39%	1382	39%	1281
42%	1304	42%	1229	42%	1469	42%	1388
45%	1409	45%	1310	45%	1584	45%	1475
48%	1506	48%	1361	48%	1689	48%	1541
51%	1610	51%	1482	51%	1767	51%	1649
54%	1723	54%	1539	54%	1858	54%	1813
57%	1819	57%	1616	57%	1955	57%	1878
60%	1882	60%	1777	60%	2031	60%	1890
63%	1954	63%	1882	63%	2112	63%	1954
66%	2013	66%	1957	66%	2171	66%	1995
69%	2087	69%	1987	69%	2213	69%	2066
72%	2144	72%	2033	72%	2268	72%	2178
75%	2218	75%	2117	75%	2292	75%	2262
78%	2264	78%	2144	78%	2338	78%	2296
81%	2328	81%	2242	81%	2384	81%	2358
84%	2362	84%	2296	84%	2418	84%	2384
87%	2400	87%	2310	87%	2442	87%	2400
90%	2430	90%	2350	90%	2464	90%	2442
93%	2464	93%	2442	93%	2490	93%	2478
96%	2496	96%	2478	96%	2496	96%	2496
99%	2500 +	99%	2500 +	99%	2500 +	99%	2500 +

Table 2 (cont.)[illegible]

Table 2 (cont.)

Calculations		Standard Positions		Sacrifice		Recognizing Threats	
%	Rating	%	Rating	%	Rating	%	Rating
3%	816	3%	820	3%	816	3%	815
6%	833	6%	840	6%	833	6%	830
9%	849	9%	860	9%	849	9%	845
12%	866	12%	880	12%	866	12%	860
15%	882	15%	910	15%	882	15%	875
18%	899	18%	950	18%	899	18%	890
21%	920	21%	984	21%	920	21%	920
24%	942	24%	984	24%	932	24%	920
27%	974	27%	1018	27%	950	27%	932
30%	999	30%	1042	30%	989	30%	950
33%	1030	33%	1057	33%	1033	33%	999
36%	1117	36%	1072	36%	1113	36%	1081
39%	1179	39%	1149	39%	1268	39%	1229
42%	1241	42%	1244	42%	1341	42%	1364
45%	1353	45%	1295	45%	1463	45%	1466
48%	1521	48%	1331	48%	1520	48%	1592
51%	1683	51%	1427	51%	1579	51%	1732
54%	1824	54%	1525	54%	1616	54%	1810
57%	1901	57%	1593	57%	1729	57%	1854
60%	1941	60%	1636	60%	1839	60%	1933
63%	2011	63%	1699	63%	1918	63%	2005
66%	2038	66%	1726	66%	1969	66%	2056
69%	2105	69%	1828	69%	2056	69%	2105
72%	2210	72%	1858	72%	2129	72%	2150
75%	2260	75%	1983	75%	2184	75%	2274
78%	2292	78%	2037	78%	2218	78%	2314
81%	2338	81%	2110	81%	2284	81%	2374
84%	2396	84%	2227	84%	2358	84%	2396
87%	2418	87%	2311	87%	2418	87%	2442
90%	2442	90%	2380	90%	2442	90%	2464
93%	2496	93%	2444	93%	2464	93%	2490
96%	2496	96%	2486	96%	2496	96%	2496
99%	2500 +	99%	2500 +	99%	2500 +	99%	2500 +

Table 3

Types	Overall	2400+	2200- 2400	1800- 2200	1400- 1800	1000- 1400	Unrtd- 1000
Summary of 50th Percentile							
Overall	53%	87%	74%	62%	52%	42%	32%
Attack	59%	91%	79%	64%	57%	45%	33%
Counterattack	49%	82%	67%	53%	44%	39%	27%
Defense	52%	86%	72%	57%	50%	38%	31%
Opening	48%	81%	53%	50%	42%	40%	23%
Middlegame	52%	86%	70%	54%	52%	41%	30%
Endgame	56%	88%	80%	63%	50%	42%	32%
Tactics	55%	85%	75%	64%	53%	44%	34%
Strategy	48%	89%	73%	58%	46%	37%	27%
Calculations	51%	83%	72%	54%	48%	46%	33%
Std Positions	62%	89%	81%	72%	53%	42%	25%
Sacrifice	56%	86%	75%	61%	55%	39%	33%
Threats	49%	83%	73%	59%	47%	40%	34%
Summary of 75th Percentile							
Overall	67%	91%	77%	66%	56%	46%	38%
Attack	71%	93%	81%	71%	60%	50%	38%
Counterattack	60%	87%	71%	60%	52%	42%	30%
Defense	67%	90%	76%	67%	54%	43%	35%
Opening	59%	88%	61%	59%	54%	48%	30%
Middlegame	65%	90%	75%	64%	57%	46%	36%
Endgame	70%	91%	80%	70%	58%	46%	38%
Tactics	68%	90%	78%	69%	60%	46%	42%
Strategy	64%	92%	76%	64%	53%	43%	31%
Calculations	65%	90%	79%	61%	53%	48%	36%
Std Positions	77%	92%	85%	77%	65%	53%	35%
Sacrifice	68%	90%	80%	68%	59%	44%	39%
Threats	65%	87%	75%	64%	54%	43%	37%
Summary of 95th Percentile							
Overall	85%	95%	79%	69%	62%	49%	41%
Attack	91%	96%	83%	74%	65%	53%	43%
Counterattack	81%	93%	75%	65%	61%	46%	43%
Defense	84%	94%	79%	71%	61%	51%	44%
Opening	94%	94%	66%	65%	65%	57%	42%
Middlegame	84%	94%	80%	66%	62%	47%	42%
Endgame	87%	95%	82%	79%	62%	52%	43%
Tactics	85%	94%	81%	76%	66%	52%	47%
Strategy	87%	95%	78%	67%	58%	47%	38%
Calculations	83%	92%	82%	68%	61%	50%	51%
Std Positions	91%	96%	91%	84%	79%	66%	54%
Sacrifice	85%	94%	81%	72%	64%	54%	48%
Threats	83%	93%	81%	69%	61%	51%	42%

Table 4

Title	Rating
NOVICE	800 – 1099
CLASS (E)	1100 – 1199
CLASS (D)	1200 – 1399
CLASS (C)	1400 – 1599
CLASS (B)	1600 – 1799
CLASS (A)	1800 – 1999
EXPERT	2000 – 2199
MASTER	2200 – 2299
FIDE MASTER	2300 – 2399
INTERNATIONAL MASTER	2400 – 2489
GRANDMASTER	2490 +

Table 5

	Maximum Score	Your Score	% Success	Rating	Title
Overall	1000				
Attack	420				
Counterattack	190				
Defense	390				
Opening	60				
Middlegame	440				
Endgame	500				
Tactics	350				
Strategy	350				
Calculation	170				
Standard Positions	130				
Recognizing Threats	500				
Sacrifice	480				

Training Tips and Recommendations

Introduction

At this point you should have completed the test and calculated your chess rating and skill level overall as well as split into 12 separate categories. Remember that these are just estimates.

Also, keep the following critical points in mind:

- As with the majority of statistical analysis, there are outliers, those who either didn't report their accurate rating, spent too little or too much time on each problem, used external help, etc
- The test environment can't exactly simulate a tournament situation; some perform much better and some perform much worse under pressure during a real rated game.
- Finally, the official rating that a player has is nothing more than just a relative parameter that represents one's overall strength relative to the strength of other tournament opponents. Thus, someone playing "club" chess in a rural area may have a significantly different strength than someone competing regularly in the major "money" events, even though their official rating might be pretty similar.

Having said all of the above, I'd like to mention that a vast majority of the *Exam* takers have reported their rating estimates as being fairly close to their official rating. Nevertheless, I would emphasize focusing on relativity of ratings across the 12 individual reports as a real gauge for finding your current playing level, your strong and weak areas, as well as a basis for developing a study plan.

While the main scope of this book is a comprehensive evaluation, I am also including a number of training suggestions, plenty of tips, ideas and book recommendations. The following chapters should help you improve your skills using a methodical approach as well as provide you with some studying short cuts. In addition to listing the books I have used myself and with my students, I also outlined various approaches that can make your chess training a more manageable process.

Finally, in every book I recommend you will find a great number of extremely well annotated examples that help to explain critical points. The majority of these examples are real classics and “well traveled” from one book to another. Thus, instead of repeating them here, I decided to include a few examples from my own games. Not only you are not likely to see them elsewhere, but I also offer a first hand knowledge of the particulars, such as the tournament situation, psychological aspects and my thought process.

Attack: Find your Targets and “Shoot”

“If you have the advantage, you must attack, or you will end up losing it!”

- William Steinitz, 1st World Chess Champion

When you hold a better position, you must attack in order to convert your advantages into a full point. Most commonly, *Attack* is referred to a direct assault on the ♔, but it can also be directed at the misplaced or the best-placed piece, at a weak isolated ♖ or a strong ♖ chain, etc.

Attack should not be confused with *Threat*. *Attack* typically involves regrouping pieces and is more of a long-term operation. That makes *Attack* different from the *Threat*, which is a short-term event. *Attack* is a strategic operation, while *Threat* is a tactical one.

The toughest questions one has to deal with during the game are – When to attack? What to attack? and Where to attack?

While every position has special nuances, the basic approach to developing *Attack* is easy to learn. Always start with a careful assessment. Evaluate the position and identify advantages that you have and advantages that your opponent has.

If you have any of the following advantages, consider attacking options. The more of them you have, the more justifiable is the *Attack*.

When to attack?

- If you have better developed pieces – no need to worry about opponent’s threats.
- More space for maneuver – ability to deploy forces fast.
- Poorly protected opponent’s ♔.
- Opponent’s position has weak squares, easy ♖ targets, and misplaced pieces.

What to attack?

You probably get the idea during the process of justifying the attack, described above. Your potential targets are: the ♔, Pieces, ♖s, or squares. I have listed them in order of importance. If you have more than one target, consider which one is easier to get to. It is not uncommon to start with an attack on one target, yet at some point switch. In fact, the

common strategic principle states that finding at least two distinct targets significantly increases your chances of success.

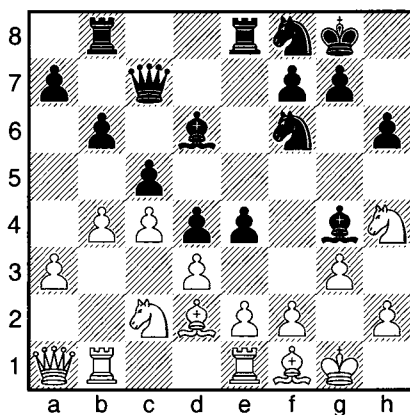
Where to attack?

You only have three real options, but the decision is never easy - ♔-side or ♚-side or Center.

Study the position carefully before making this decision. As a quick hint or a reasonability check, look at your ♖ structure. Typically –

- Attack in center when the center is open, otherwise
- Attack the ♚-side, when your ♖ chain is “pointing” towards the ♚-side or
- Attack the ♔-side, when your ♖ chain is “pointing” towards the ♔-side

Consider the following example from my junior years.



Kaganski, M - Khmel'nitsky, I

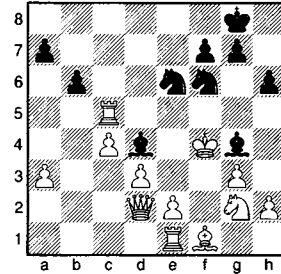
Kiev, 1986

After 1.♖h4

Black has initiative, advantage in space and a strong center – all indications of a strong attack. While Black's ♖ chain (a7-b6-c5-d4-c4) is “pointing” towards the center and ♔-side, White's ♖ chain (e2-d3-c4) is “pointing” towards the ♚-side. While White's strikes on the ♚-side fell short, Black's attack was relentless.

1...♞e3! Black begins his assault in the center – opening diagonals and

files by sacrificing the ♖. 2. ♖×e3 ♖×e3 3. ♙×e3 ♖×e3! – the ♖ is sacrificed for a minor piece in order to remove one of the key defenders. 4. ♗×e3 ♙e5 5. ♔a2 ♙d4 6. ♔d2 ♙e8 7. ♗hg2 ♔e5 8. ♖c5 ♔×c5 9. ♙f2 White is pinned all around 9... ♙h3! Attacking the defender and clearing g4 for the ♗. 10. ♖b5 ♖×e3!! Now Black sacrifices his ♔, 1. ♖c5 ♖f3+ 12. ♙×f3 ♙g4+ 13. ♙f4 ♗e6# Take a look at the diagram it is a truly picturesque position. Black's remaining pieces are set up symmetrically.



Occasionally, you may need to attack the strongest point in your opponent's position. Whether or not it is wise depends on the circumstances. Again, you must foresee the ultimate benefit of the attack, or else change the target.

Finally, another useful tip - when planning the attack you should assess how many attackers can be "mobilized" with reasonable efforts. Then compare it to the number of defenders your opponent can bring. Only if you expect to overpower him, go ahead "full speed".

Training Recommendations:

In order to improve your overall attacking skills, you should do the following:

1. Improve your *Tactical* skills.
2. Develop a better *Opening* repertoire, and, in the process, familiarize yourself with attacking plans that are common to the openings you choose.
3. Learn various attacking techniques from training manuals.
4. Go over *annotated* games of strong attacking players –Alekhine, Tal, Shirov etc.
5. Practice various training positions against a computer.

Novice and **Class C** players should focus on #1. In addition to the books you will find recommended in the report on *Tactics*, I would suggest *King in Jeopardy* by Lev Alburt and Sam Palatnik, and *Manual of Chess Combination-I* by Sergei Ivashenko.

Class B and **Class A** players should focus on #1, 2 and 3. Specifically for attack training, I like Attacking Technique by Colin Crouch, and Art of Attack in Chess by Milan Vukovich.

For **Experts** and **higher**, it is vital to work on all recommendations (#1 through #5). In addition to the above-mentioned books, I would advise to study Alexei Shirov's Fire on the Board, and Mark Dvoretsky's Attack and Defense.

Counterattack: Turning the Tables!

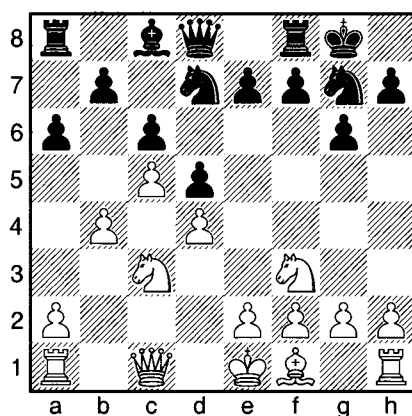
"The best defense is the counterattack!"

- Anonymous

When your opponent has an advantage, you should accept the necessity of defending patiently and limiting your aggressive moves. Still, you have to remain vigilant, constantly looking for opportunities to go on offense. Keep in mind that, when it is not justified or poorly prepared, *Counterattack* can lead to quick self-destruction. Defend patiently and smartly and, when an opportunity arises, don't miss it. Often, this could be your only chance!

Most common types of the *Counterattack* are Strike in Center, Strike on the Opposite side of where your opponent is attacking, and Strike Against the Attacking Piece(s).

Flank attacks have much greater chances of being successful when the center is locked. Thus, Strike in Center that leads to its opening is often the best way to launch a *Counterattack*.



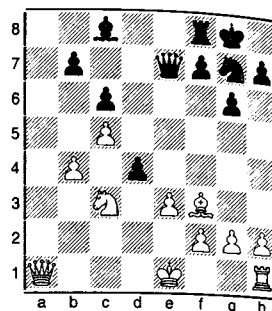
Aseev, K - Khmelnitsky, I
Sibenik Open, Yugoslavia 1989
After 11. b4

White commences an attack on the ♔-side before finishing development. Black immediately strikes in the center trying to open up the files.

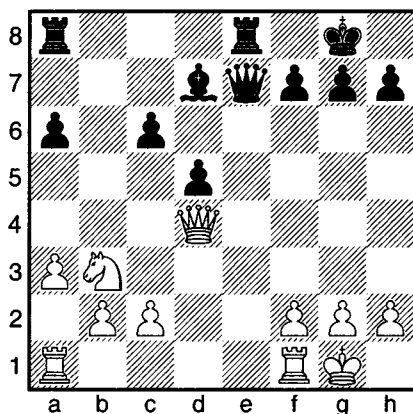
11...♟e5! 12.♟xe5 (after 12.♟xe5 ♟xe5 13.♟xe5 ♔e7 14.♟f4 ♟f6 15.♟xf6 ♟xf6 Black has very strong attack) **12...♔e7 13.♟e3 ♟xe5 14.♟e2?! (Better was**

14. ♖×e5 ♔×e5 15. ♕e2 ♖a5 16. ♖a3 ♖d4 17. ♖e×d4
 ♔×d4 18. ♖b1 ♕f5 Black has the initiative) 4... ♖a5
 15. ♖a3 ♖×f3+ 16. ♕×f3 ♖×b4 17. ♖×b4
 ♖×a1 18. ♔×a1 ♖d4! (Diagram)

Another breakthrough in the center; Black seized the initiative. Even though White was able to castle later, he didn't manage to stop the devastating attack. Black won on move 31.



Strike on the Opposite side often forces the attacker to slowdown, or even shift into defensive mode, but beware of the targets. If your ♔ is under attack and you launch your *Counterattack* against your opponent's ♖ structure, he will likely call your bluff and continue his attack. While you may win a few ♖s, your ♔ will likely be checkmated. Vice versa is true, see the example from the game against a 2003 US Champion.

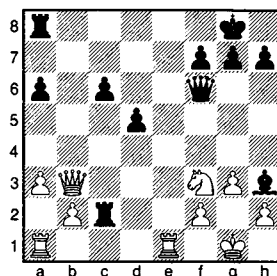


Shabalov, A - Khmelnitsky, I
 US Championship, Parsippany 1996
 After 16. ♔d4

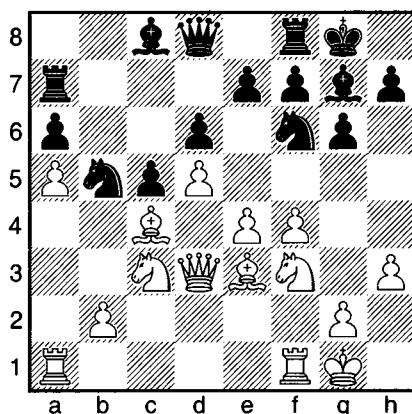
After eliminating Black's dark colored ♕ just a few moves ago, White is looking towards the *Endgame*, where his ♖, posted on c5 or d4 will dominate Black's ♕. While White is targeting Black's weakened ♔-side, Black begins his *Counterattack* against White ♔. The assault must begin immediately, because its success is based on two *temporary* factors – the control of the open e-file and White ♖ being far from the ♔-side.

16... ♖g5! 17. ♖c3 ♙e4 18. ♘d2 ♙h3
 19. ♗g3? (more prudent was to settle for an
 inferior endgame after 19. ♖xh3 ♖xd2) ♙e2
 20. ♘f3 ♖g6 21. ♙fe1 ♙xc2 22. ♖b3 ♖f6!
 - (Diagram)

White was forced to cancel his attack on the ♖-side and focus on defense. Black managed to convert his temporary advantages into a nice material gain and won on move 37.



Strike against the Attacking Piece(s) is the most stunning example of *Counterattack*, because you hit your opponent right where he feels most secure. It often involves *Tactics* or *Sacrifice*.



Dozorets, A - Khmel'nitsky, I
 Philadelphia Open, 1992
 After 17. ♙e3

This is a typical position from the dynamic Volga-Benko Gambit. White is building up pressure in the center, preparing standard advance e4-e5. Black is lacking space and forced to maneuver on the ♖-side, while preparing to deal with White's breakthrough. However, tactical specifics of this position allowed me to strike right in the middle of my opponent's pride – his center. 17... ♘xc3! 18. ♗xc3 White ♖ must protect the ♗ on e4. 18... ♘xe4! Black takes the ♗ anyway! White has to surrender his precious ♗, because after 19. ♖xe4? ♙f5 his ♖ is suddenly

trapped in the middle of the board. Game continued **19.♖fc1 ♘f6** and Black won on move 27.

Recommendations:

In order to improve your counterattacking skills you should do the following:

1. Improve your tactical skills and ability to recognize opportunities of combinations or small tactics.
2. Improve your strategic understanding.
3. Learn various defensive and attacking techniques from training manuals.
4. Go over *annotated* games of some excellent defensive players – Lasker, Petrosyan, Karpov etc..
5. Practice various training positions against a computer.

Use the same materials recommended in the reports on *Attack and Defense*. Additionally, consider this book - *Defense and Counterattack Techniques in Chess* by Lev Polugayevsky and Yakov Damsky.

Defense: Various Techniques

“The winner of the game is the player who makes the next to last mistake!”

- Savelyi Tartakower, grandmaster

Now that you have seen my ideas on the subject of *Attack*, you will be able to apply most of them when considering the subject of *Defense*.

If your position is worse, you need to prepare yourself to defend first and look for aggressive options second. Do not just stay passive and ignore good forceful actions. Just scale down and be more defense-oriented. Way too often, I have witnessed players going “all out with a bang” and quickly losing, when their position was far from hopeless and just a couple of accurate moves would have been sufficient to defend or steer the game into only a slightly worse situation.

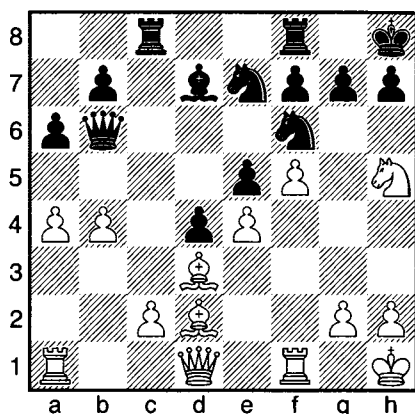
In addition to Pure Defense, other defensive techniques, such as Prophylaxis, Trading Down, and Counterattack are frequently used.

When using Pure Defense, you just mobilize your pieces to slow down or even stop the attack. Theory of Prophylaxis was developed by Aaron Nimtsovitch; it emphasizes overprotection of key spots in order to discourage future attack against them, or make it less threatening. When Trading Down defense is used, position is usually simplified, threats removed and this may happen even at the expense of a small material “payoff”. The defender relies on his *Endgame* skills and knowledge of *Standard Endgame Positions*. Counterattack is an exciting resource and was discussed in the previous chapter.

Take a look at the example from my game against former US Champion Nick De Firmian from the 1995 US Championship. Here you will see all of the abovementioned techniques being used.

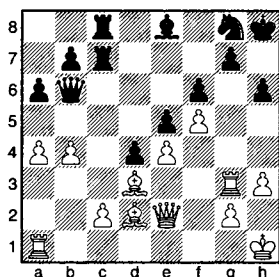
(Diagram on the next page)

White’s ♖ structure is pointing towards my ♔, the center is locked and my ♔ is feeling “lonely” on the ♖-side. White ♔, ♖ and ♘ are ready to join “the party”, while presence of the ♕f5 insures a space advantage. All symptoms of a strong attack are present.



De Firmian, N - Khmeltnitsky, I
Modesto, USA 1995
After 19.♘h5

Over the next few moves, I tried to utilize all of the common defensive methods. The game continued - 19...♘xh5 20.♙xh5 ♖f6 21.♗f3 ♘g8 22.♗h3 ♖h6 23.♗g3 ♙e8 24.♙e2 ♗f7 25.♖h3 ♗fc7 (Diagram).



Six moves later I felt much better about my position – I eliminated one attacker (the ♘); defended squares around my ♖ (f6, g6, g7, h6); brought the ♘ “just in case” (*Prophylaxis*); and activated ♗s on the c-file (sacrifice on c2 is always an option). Dynamic play continued deep into the endgame with both sides exchanging blows. Finally, the game ended in a Draw on move 62.

Good *Opening* preparation will help you get into a comfortable play right from the beginning and avoid defending tough *Middlegame* positions.

Developing your *Tactical* and *Calculation* skills will help you improve your defensive skills in sharp positions. Defending inferior *Endgame* positions is a very important skill and you must expand your knowledge of *Standard Positions* in order to improve in that area.

Recommendations:

In order to improve your overall defensive skills you should do the following:

- 1 Improve your tactical skills and ability to recognize threats.
- 2 Develop a better *Opening* repertoire, and familiarize yourself with common plans.
- 3 Memorize a large number of standard endgame positions and various endgame plans.
- 4 Learn various defensive techniques from training manuals.
- 5 Go over *annotated* games of some excellent defensive players – Lasker, Petrosian, Karpov etc.
- 6 Practice various training positions against a computer.

Novice, Class C players should focus on #1. In addition to the books recommended in the *Tactical* report, I would suggest *How to Defend in Chess* by Colin Crouch.

Class B and **Class A** players should focus on #1, 2, and 3. Again, *How to Defend in Chess* by Colin Crouch offers some excellent training material.

For **Experts** and **higher**, it is essential to do all - one through five. In addition to the Crouch's book mentioned above, I also recommend Mark Dvoretsky's *Attack and Defense*.

Opening: Start Your Game Right!

“Quick development is a basis of Opening play!”

- Arthur Yusupov, grandmaster

Opening is one of the most complex areas that a player has to master. It is constantly evolving in two distinct directions. Many older lines have been revised and updated, sometimes resulting in the complete reversal in assessment. Also, *Opening* lines go deeper and deeper, and it is not surprising to see non-masters playing their initial 10-20 moves with very little thinking, just following the “book.”

Thanks to the technology of the information age we live in, anyone with a personal computer and chess software tools can –

1. Easily obtain over 2 million games going back to ancient history.
2. Sort and summarize this data into variation trees with various statistical reports.
3. Have strong playing engines “fill in the blanks” when no real game data is available.

All that is left for a human is to learn and understand the ideas and memorize the variations as accurately as possible.

Sounds easy, doesn't it? Well, consider this common possibility – after you did all of the above you get a new magazine where you find a new game that has a “killer” novelty in one of the lines you play. This new move changes evaluation so dramatically that you are forced to shelve the variation instantly and start over again. This actually happens very frequently and you need to maintain your openings with diligence. Your future opponents have access to pretty much the same information you do and will be waiting to punish you for poor preparation.

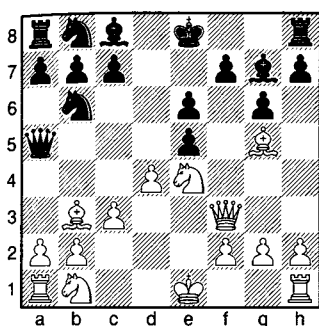
Yes, developing and maintaining openings is a lot of work! Before you get discouraged, consider this –

1. You are not alone - Your future opponents are having the same opening preparation difficulties – organizing and absorbing unlimited information in a very limited amount of time.
2. The foundation of your opening preparation is the key – once you have laid out your opening book, figured out a research technique

and developed a learning plan, you are set for years to come. The theory will change, but the methods will be similar if not the same.

3. Prepare yourself, but don't overdo it. As long as your *Openings* are reasonably well prepared, your game will be decided in the *Middlegame* or *Endgame*. Spend plenty of time on those areas.

Consider my preparation in the Alekhine defense - my opening of choice for Black for many years. After the following moves 1.♠e4 ♘f6 2.♠e5 ♘d5 3.♠d4 ♠d6 4.♘f3 ♠g6 5.♙c4 ♘b6 6.♙b3 ♙g7 7.♘g5 ♠e6 8.♞f3



♞e7 9.♘e4 ♠xe5 10.♙g5 ♞b4+ 11.♠c3 ♞a5 (Diagram) a very dynamic position occurs that I learned after analyzing opening preparation of the former US Champion - Lev Alburt.

The 12. ♙f6 was considered a main move and after 12... 0-0 13. ♙xg7 ♖xg7 14.♞f6+ ♖g8 15.♞xe5 White has a very small advantage. I was well prepared for that line, when in Ukrainian championship, master (now Grandmaster)

Yuri Kruppa unloaded 12.♘f6+!? After long thinking, I played a series of good moves 12...♙f8 13.♠d5!? ♠e4! But after 14.♞f4, I made a poor choice - 14...♘a6? and ended up having a terrible position out of the opening (which nevertheless I defended and got a Draw).

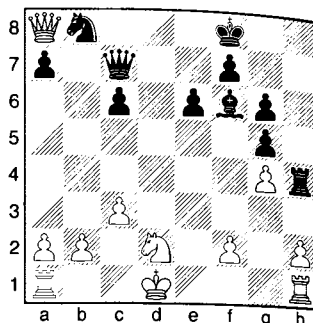
Getting in trouble and time pressure so early in one of my favorite openings, forced me to take a closer look at the position after 12.♘f6+ It is much easier to scrutinize this very dynamic position at home and not under the pressure of the tournament situation. I found a neat idea – an *exchange sacrifice*, which would net me a strong attack or allow winning White ♞, or both!

Less than a year later an opportunity to test my preparation presented itself against a strong and very experienced International Master Eduard Mnatsakanian from Armenia. Like Kruppa, he also played 12.♘f6+ but this time I was ready!

Take a look at the example on the next page.

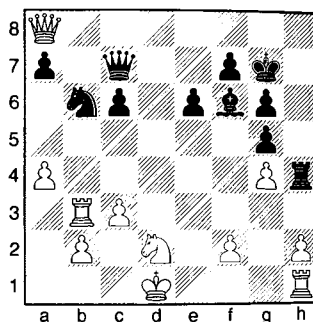
Mnatsakanian, E - Khmeltsky, I
Sibenik Open, Yugoslavia, 1989

After 12...♙f8! 13.♘d5!? ♚e4! 14.♖f4
♜×d5! 15.♙×d5 ♜h6! 16.♖×e4 ♙×g5
17.♙×b7 ♜h4! 18.♙g4 ♙×b7 19.♖×b7
♙×f6 20.♖×a8 ♖e5+ 21.♚d1 ♙c6!
22.♜d2 ♖c7! We reached the following
position (Diagram)



While my opponent was desperately trying to find a way out of this mess, I was enjoying the game immensely. After all, I had studied this position extensively at home and was now “earning the dividends.”

White’s position is a mess and on top of that, the trapped ♖ on a8 will soon be lost. 23.♙a4 ♜g7 24.♞a3 ♜d7 25.♞b3
♜b6 (Diagram)



26.♞×b6 (26.♖c8 ♞h8) ♖×b6 27.♙a5
♖×b2 28.♖×c6 ♙×c3 and White
resigned

After the game, my very experienced opponent was shaking his head and complaining that he lost without making a single mistake, except ... when he picked the opening variation.

In this test, my focus was on checking your knowledge of selected general principles and tactical ideas common in some openings. The true level of your opening preparation depends on how well you are versed in the opening variations you play. Think back to your recent games and consider how comfortable you felt getting out of the opening. No matter what the answer is, be prepared to learn more and more every day, as new ideas are discovered and your next opponent might already be working on some of them!

Recommendations:

In order to improve your *Opening* play, you should do the following:

1. Learn general *Opening* principles, such as – the value of the center, necessity of rapid development, safety of the ♔ etc...
2. Choose openings based on your taste and learn some basic plans, tactical ideas and memorize short variations.
3. Develop a more variation-oriented repertoire, based on available books and software.
4. Write your own **opening book**, where you would have a detailed move-by-move analysis of every particular opening variation you play. You should outline your responses to every reasonable reply by your opponent.
5. Practice your *Openings* against a computer.

Novice players should focus on #1. Read *Winning Chess Openings* by Yasser Seirawan and *Mastering the Opening* by Byron Jacobs

Class C and **Class B** players should focus on #1 and #2. *The Ideas behind Chess Openings* by Ruben Fine (strategy) and the recently published *Encyclopedia of Opening Mistakes* by Anatoly Matsykevich (tactics) are good training choices. Many recent books from the *Starting out ...* opening series offer a very good foundation when you are ready to start learning a specific opening in greater detail.

Class A and **Experts** will hardly survive into the Middlegame without sufficient preparation listed in #3. **Masters** and **higher** should prepare their own very detailed opening books (#4). In addition to the standard chess software tools like ChessBase and ChessAssistant, comprehensive books on openings by leading experts are recommended. For example, if you are playing *French defense*, consider books by Lev Psakhis, who played this opening extensively at the highest level for many years. Several valuable general recommendations on *Opening* training can be found in the book - *Opening Preparation* by Mark Dvoretsky.

Periodicals *Chess Informant* and *New in Chess* offer a great number of current theoretical developments from the games of grandmasters.

Everyone is advised to practice against chess-playing software. Stop the game after 15-25 moves and assess the result of the opening play.

Middlegame: Complexity is Escalating

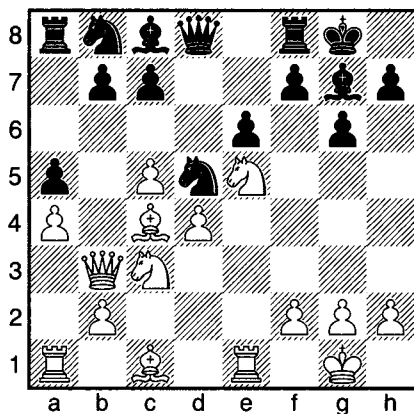
“Before the Endgame, the Gods have placed the Middlegame”

- Siegbert Tarrasch, grandmaster

Once you finish your piece development, establish your ♔’s safety and are ready to begin the battle, the *Middlegame* starts. It is considered to be the most complex part of the game. Over 70% of the games are decided in the *Middlegame*.

To be successful in the *Middlegame*, you need to combine the best of your *Tactical* and *Strategic* skills. Usually, you start by utilizing the typical *Middlegame* plans and try to steer the game into a favorable direction. Soon, you would need to decide whether to *Attack* or to *Defend*.

Here is an example of an interesting *Middlegame* against Fide Master Emory Tate - one of the most feared Non-GM players on the US tournament circuit.



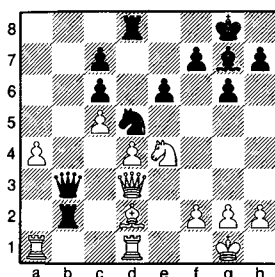
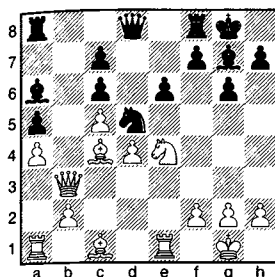
Tate,E - Khmeltnitsky,I

Liberty Bell Open Philadelphia, 2000

After 15.♘c3

Emory caught me off-guard in one of his “pet” variations in *Alekhine defense*. My position was quickly deteriorating and, with his last move (15.♘c3), White turned up the heat. He increased the pressure on my ♗d5, which was the only bright spot I had in my position. I had to dismiss

15...♖c6 due to 16.♗e4 eyeing d6 and also planning ♕g5. In addition, I disliked both 15...♗xc3 16. ♖xc3 and 15...♗b4 16.♕e3. At that point the future seemed to be very grim until I saw 15...♗c6! The more I looked at this move, the better I liked it. In response, White played the best - 16.♗xc6 (16.♗xd5 ♗xd4 17.♣d3 ♖xd5; 16.♗xf7 ♖xf7 17.♗xd5 ♗xd4 18.♣a2 ♗c2-+) 16...♖xc6 (strengthening my ♗d5) 17.♗e4 Now White offers the ♖



on d4. Thanks but, no –17...♕a6! (Diagram)

Black solved the problem of the “bad” ♕ on c8. 18.♕xa6 ♖xa6 19.♕g5? (only helped my plans) 19...♣b8 20.♣d3 ♖a7 21.♗ed1 offered another free ♖, but no thanks again. 21...♖b7 I was about to make another big strategic decision – trading my ♖a5 for his ♖b2. My plan was to use my active pieces to attack his ♖s on d4 and c5. I only had minimal concern about his ♖a. 22.♕d2 ♖xb2! 23.♕xa5 ♖d8 24.♕d2 ♖b3! (Diagram)

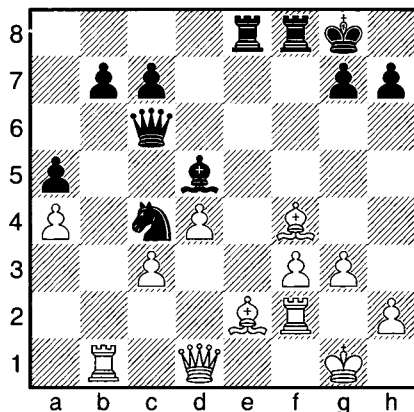
I am very proud of this move! White ♖ was an important defender and could’ve helped in his future attack. At the same time, my ♖ was not that great in the attack. After the ♖s were gone, Black’s remaining pieces piled up on White’s weak ♖s and White was left without any counterplay!

The above game shows that having a good *Strategy* is extremely important in the *Middlegame*. Also, when there are adequate motives, you should be on the lookout for *Tactics*, *Combinations* and *Sacrifices*.

The next example is from a game against a very experienced Grandmaster Dmitry Gurevich played in the 1995 US Closed Championship in Modesto, California.

(Diagram on the next page)

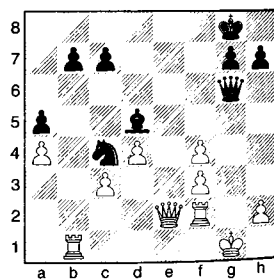
After sacrificing ♖ early in the opening, I was enjoying my position. All Black pieces are placed almost ideally and are ready to attack wherever an opportunity presents.



Gurevich, D - Khmel'nitsky, I
 US Championship, Modesto 1995
 After 24.♖b1

Among the potential targets are ♖a4, ♖f3, ♗e2 etc... even the ♖b1 is not safe. In fact, the placement of the ♖b1 was the motif of the combination that I started by 24...♗×e2! After 25.♗×e2 ♗×f3 Black not only regained the *exchange*, but also picked up the ♖ in the process. After re-establishing the material balance, Black continued enjoying his positional advantages and went on to win the game.

Even worse would have been 25.♗×e2 since, after sacrificing another ♗ for a ♗ 25...♗×f4! 26.♖×f4, Black recovers the ♗ for free via 26...♗g6+ (Diagram) and ends up with a very favorable “two minor pieces vs. ♖” endgame.



Additionally, success in the *Middlegame* is directly related to your *Opening* preparation and *Endgame* skills. The knowledge of common *Middlegame* plans is an integral part of a quality *Opening* preparation. It often enables you to steer the game towards the *Middlegame* positions that you are already familiar with. Solid *Endgame* knowledge will help you to properly evaluate various trade opportunities that often arise in the *Middlegame*.

Recommendations:

In order to improve your *Middlegame* play, you should do the following:

1. Learn standard *Middlegame* principles.
2. Improve your *Tactical* skills (see separate report).
3. Improve your *Openings* (see separate report). Have some brief planning incorporated into your opening preparation.
4. Improve your *Endgames* (see separate report).
5. Study some classical examples and expand your understanding of *Strategic* ideas beyond the basics related to the openings you play.
6. Practice various *Middlegame* positions against a computer.

Novice players should focus on #1 and #2. Good reading materials are *Logical Chess* by Irvin Chernev and *Understating Chess Move by Move* by John Nunn.

Class C and **Class B** players should focus on #1-4. *My System* by Aaron Nimtsovitch is an appropriate read at this stage. In addition, try *Simple Chess* by John Emms.

Class A and **Experts** who have read *My System*, should go over the games from another classic – *1953 Inter-Zonal* by David Bronstein. And also, the more recent *Road to Chess Improvement* by Alex Yermolinsky.

Masters and **higher** would definitely benefit from Mark Dvoretsky's *Positional Play* and *Attack and Defense*.

Many interesting *Middlegame* positions should be practiced against a computer. Always give yourself sufficient time to think - at least 15 minutes per game. After making 10-15 moves stop and evaluate the resulting position. If necessary, practice the same position more than once. Also, consider switching colors in few games to get a perspective from the other side.

Endgame: Maximum Result with Minimum Material!

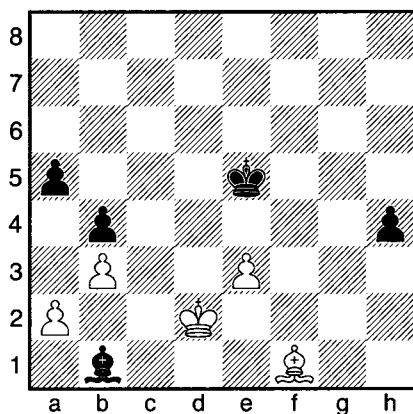
“To play with correctness and skill the ends of games is an important but very rare accomplishment”

– Howard Staunton

Endgame is a stage in the game that often gets too little attention during preparation. It may be intuitive to downplay its importance when you are just learning chess, since you never seem to reach that stage. However, as you become more and more experienced, *Endgame* becomes a frequent part of your regular games. If you are comfortable in *Endgame*, it could become a great weapon and a confidence booster, when you know that with every trade you will be getting closer to the setting you are well prepared to play.

To play *Endgame* successfully, you must learn *Standard Endgame positions*, *Strategic* principles, *Tactical* ideas, and develop excellent *Calculation* skills.

In the following example, playing against an International Master, I used a *Strategic* idea, a *Sacrifice*, and a *Calculation* to convert my positional advantage into an easy win.



Delaune, R– Khmelnitsky, I

Philadelphia, 1993

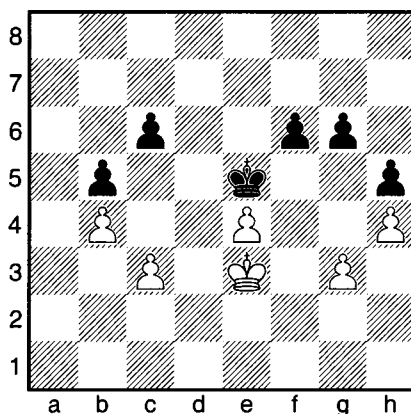
After 59.♔d2

Black is dominating; he will soon be able to win the ♙ for ♖h and, also, ♔-side ♙s. White has minimal drawing chances, like trapping Black ♙

(59...♙xa2 60.♖c2 and 61.♖b2) or sacrificing the ♙ for the h-♖ and then trading ♖s for Black b-♖.

I decided to allow White to trap my ♙, since he would have to pay a dear price – all of his remaining ♖s. With White ♖ stuck guarding my protected passed b4-♖, my ♖ would go uncontested and win the ♙ for the h-♖. After that, it would go back to the ♗-side and “finish the job”. I calculated this variation: 59...♙xa2 60.♖c2 ♖e4 61.♖b2 ♙xb3 62.♖xb3 ♖xe3 63.♖a4 ♖f2 64.♙h3 ♖g3 65.♙e6 ♖h3 and White resigned since Black ♗-side ♖s were untouchable. If White were to take the a5-♖, his ♙ couldn't single-handedly stop two ♖s (65.♖xa5 ♖h2 66.♙d5 ♖b3).

A standard *Tactical* idea (that I first saw in the study by N.D. Grigoriev) and an accurate *Calculation* were the main reasons for a successful result in the following blitz game at the Internet Chess Club.



LionHeart (IM) - MAZSOLA (GM)

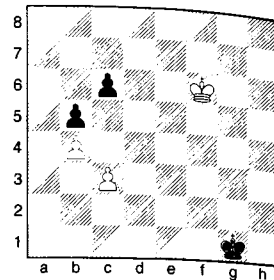
ICC 3 0 Internet Chess Club, 2003

After 54. ♖g3

In this position from the 3 minute “shootout”, I managed to stun the grandmaster with only few seconds left on my clock. My last move 54. ♖g3 set up a trap, and my opponent fell right into it after the natural 54...♙g5. Black was trying to create an outside passed ♖ (in case of 54. ♖xg5? ♖xg5), but now, the “bolt from the blue” 55. ♖g4!! All of a sudden, Black's active ♖ is a liability, since it would take an extra effort to get him back to fight against my passed h-♖. Black quickly fell apart

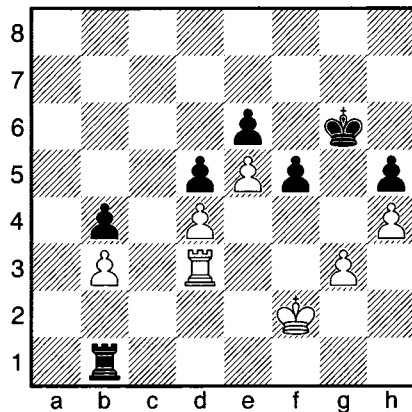
after 55...♙×h4? 56.♙×h5 ♖f5 57.♙h6 ♖f4+ 58. ♖f3 ♖f6 59. ♙e5+ and Black ♖ couldn't stop both ♙s.

Remarkably, Black was lost even after the best 55...♙×g4! 56.♙h5 ♖e6 (56...♖f5 57.♙h6 ♖f4+ 58.♖e2 ♖f6 59.e5+) 57.♖f2 ♖f7 58.♖g3 ♖g7 59.♖×g4 ♖h6 60.♖f5 ♖×h5 61.♖×f6 ♙g4 62.♙e5 ♙g3 63.♙e6 ♙g2 64.♙e7 ♙g1 ♖65.♙e8 ♖+ ♖h4 66.♖h8+ ♖g3 67.♖g7+ ♖f2 68.♖×g1+ ♖×g1 (Diagram)



This simple endgame saw an amazing transformation: from the ♙s into the ♖s, then back into the ♙s endgame. Now, White ♖ will easily pick Black ♙s and the next transformation will again be into the ♖ endgame. However, this time only White will have a ♖!

The following *static* ♖ endgame also saw an interesting strategic idea involving a significant transformation.



Mikhalchishin,A (GM) - Khmel'nitsky,I (IM)

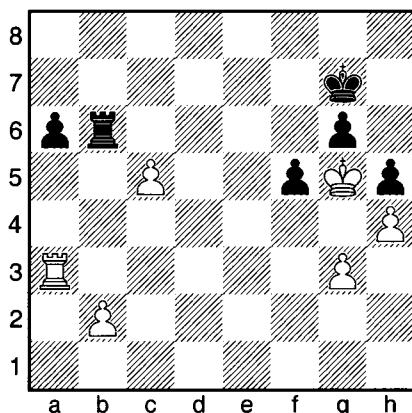
Sibenik, Yugoslavia, 1991

After 73.♖f2

Black ♖ is dominating his White counterpart, however, the latter is successfully managing to defend weak White ♙s. Black ♖ must join the battle, but how? After somewhat intuitive 73...♙f4!, instead for the weak 74.♙×f4? ♖f5, White could play 74.♖f3! and not only does Black ♖ remains cut off, but also White ♖ becomes very active. Nevertheless, I

recognized that Black ♖ would be more successful in the hunt for the ♘ than its counterpart! After **74...♖b2+ 75.♔g1 ♗xg3! 76.♖f6+ ♔g7 77.♖xh2! 78.♖d6 ♖xh4 79.♖xh4 ♖e4 80.♗e6 ♗h4**, Black ♖ was placed ideally and Black ♗s were ready to roll. After **81.♖h5 ♖xh4 82.♗e7 ♔f7 83.♖h7+ ♔e8 84.♔g2 ♖g4 85.♔g1 ♗g2** White resigned. He is in *zugzwang* and must give up the ♗e7.

Finally, a curious example of how one of the key *Strategic Endgame* principles – *activating the ♔*, seriously backfired.



Garcia, G - Khmelnsky, I
Philadelphia International, 1994
After **83.♗c5**

We were both under time pressure, with me having less than 1 minute to finish the game. Grandmaster Garcia was dominating thanks to a very active ♔ and a much better ♗ structure. All he needed to do was to transfer his ♖ on the open d-file and penetrate to either d6 or d7. However, his last move **83.♗c5??** was a mistake that presented me with an unexpected opportunity. After striking **83...♖b4!** it was White, who had to resign at once due to unstoppable **84...♖g4#** So much for the active ♔!

Recommendations:

In order to improve your *Endgame* play, you should do the following:

1. Learn basic endgame strategies.

2. Learn Standard Endgame Positions (see more in the separate report).
3. Learn standard Endgame Tactical ideas.
4. Improve your Calculation skills by solving studies.
5. Learn typical complex endgames.
6. Practice various endgame positions against a computer.

Novice players should focus on #1. Some good reading material is Chess Endings, Essential Knowledge by Yuri Averbach.

Class C and **Class B** players should focus on #1-3. Ruben Fine's classic – Basic Chess Endings will provide good theory basis, while Manual of Chess Endgames by Sarhan Guliev can serve as an exercise book. Training software Advanced Chess School from Convekta. Ltd is an excellent practicing tool.

Class A and **Experts** should work on #1-4. In addition to Fine's and Guliev's books listed above, I would suggest Fundamental Chess Endgames by Karsten Muller and David Lamperht, and Endgame Manual by Mark Dvoretsky.

Masters and **higher** should master all #1-5. In addition to the abovementioned books, take a look at Mikhail Shereshevsky's Endgame Strategy. In addition, training software Chess Endgame Training from Convekta Ltd is also an excellent practicing tool.

Additionally, **Class A** and **higher** would definitely benefit from incorporating solving studies into their training. My favorite training collection of studies is by Lev Kubbel. For those, who want to use a computer, the Studies software from Convekta Ltd is another excellent tool.

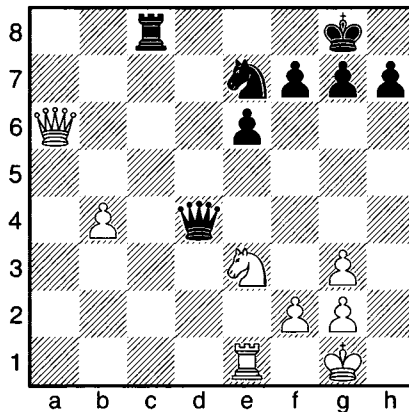
Tactics: Exciting “Explosions” on the Chessboard

“In chess – 90% is Tactics”

– Richard Teichmann, grandmaster

Tactical operations such as small combinations, are among the most fun plays and also very much appreciated by every chess fan. The main reason is that the typical *Tactics* involves forced variations, direct threats, and stunning sacrifices, yet the lines are usually very short and easy to follow. At the heart of every combination is the *tactical motif*. For example – a weak back rank, an overloaded defender, an unprotected piece, etc... Learn to recognize the motifs and you will be a master tactician. You also need to learn various tactical methods of execution – *double attack* (such as a *fork*), *deflection*, *attraction*, *pin*, *skewer*, and *elimination of defender* are among the most common.

Consider the following example –



Khmelnitsky, I - Kabatianski, A

Ukraine, 1986

White to Move!

Motifs: weak 8th rank, unprotected ♞e7 which is the sole defender of the ♖c8.

Methods: *deflection, clearing the file, elimination of defender.*

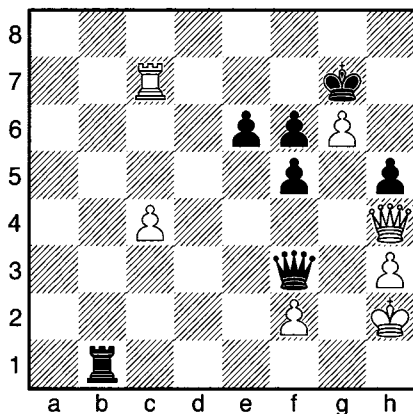
1. ♜f5! and Black resigned because he can't defend simultaneously the

♞, ♖ and 8th rank. In case of **1... ♜xf5** (1... ♜f6 2. ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 3. ♜xc8+;

1... ♜e8 2. ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 3. ♜a8+) **2. ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 3. ♜e8#** Black is checkmated.

Note that attractively looking **1.♖d1** fails due to **1...♞×b4!** After **2.♞×c8+ ♜×c8 3.♖d8+**, Black ♞ arrives just in time – **3...♞f8** to secure endgame with extra ♟.

No less exciting than *Tactics for a Win* (checkmate or gaining material), is *Tactics for a Draw* (perpetual check, stalemate, elimination of winning resources).



Teasley, D - Khmel'nitsky, I
Parsippany, USATE 2001
After **39. ♖c7+**

White's position was doomed, since the checks would end soon, while Black was ready to announce the checkmate. Presence of the ♟c4 eliminates the *stalemate* idea, so the last White's hope is the *perpetual check*. Under strong time pressure, I saw that after **39...♝×g6** White could stop the checkmate via **40.♞g3+ ♞×g3 41.♝×g3**. Even though Black would've had excellent winning chances I didn't play it. Instead I played **39...♝h6**, what I thought was an easy way to finish the game at once. As soon as I made this move on the board, I realized that I let my opponent off the hook. After **40.♖h7+ ♝×g6** (and no more checks, right?) **41.♖h6+!** Oops! By sacrificing the ♖, White pulled off a *perpetual check*. To avoid checkmate, Black must take the ♖ - **41...♝×h6 42.♞f6+ ♝h7 43.♞f7+** Draw!

In addition to learning typical motifs and methods, you should work on improving your visualization of the board. Developing your ability to foresee various defenses and adjust accordingly would ensure that your combinations are successful. The way one should work on improving

Tactical skills is to train in two distinct directions – to learn, understand, and memorize as many various motifs and methods as possible and also to improve move selection process (another term for *Calculation*).

Double attack, *Discovered attack* and *Pin* are amongst the most common tactical operations.

Tactics is one of the most exciting elements of chess, yet many players do not realize that it is an important part of one's overall *Strategy*. While *Strategy* is all about general ideas and planning, *Tactics* is based on concrete variations. It is not wise to build your game on tactical ideas alone. Instead make sure your game is strategically sound and look for tactical ideas to improve your position or even shorten your opponent's "misery."

Recommendations:

In order to improve your *Tactics*, you should do the following:

1. Learn some basic threats – checkmate, winning material etc...
2. Learn basic tactical motifs.
3. Be open-minded about giving up material.
4. Improve your visualization of the chessboard.
5. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of traps.
6. Learn complex tactical ideas, specific to each stage of the game.
7. Improve your *Calculation* (see more in the separate report).
8. Master your overall Tactical vision.

Novice players should focus on learning what the threats are and some basic tactical operations. Good reading material covering standard mating motifs comes from Reinfeld's *1001 ways to Checkmate*. In addition, I also strongly recommend – S. Ivashenko's *Manual of Chess Combinations – I*

Class C and **Class B** players should work on #1-4. In addition to the above-mentioned books I typically suggest John Hall's *Chess Tactics for Juniors*, S. Ivashenko's *Manual of Chess Combinations – II* and Reinfeld's *1001 winning Sacrifices*. A good way to practice visualization is to play short games (5-10 moves) blindfold and do more puzzles without moving pieces.

Class A and **Experts** should go well beyond just basic *Tactics*. One of the critical advantages should be their ability to recognize various traps and tactical ideas. Memorization of all standard motifs and typical methods is a must. My favorite book recommendations are – M.Bloch's *Tactical Motifs* and S. Ivashenko's *Manual of Chess Combinations – II*.

Masters can't survive these days without having exceptional tactical skills. You should constantly solve puzzles to keep your mind sharp. I always suggest doing nothing but *Tactics* the last week before a tournament. The computer program CT-ART, by Convekta Ltd is an excellent training tool. Also, recently published *Manual of Chess Combinations – III* by A.Mazja is a challenging exercise book.

Strategy: Do You Have a Plan?

“Ability to evaluate position is no less important than ability to calculate variations!”

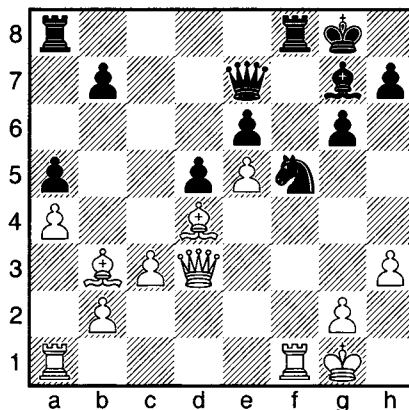
– Mihail Botvinnik, World Champion

Every time you make a move, you must have a reason for playing it. Thinking by reasoning is called *Strategy*. You use strategic thinking all the time when arranging your daily activities. The better prepared you are the better outcome you would expect. Chess is a battle, a constant conflict of intentions and ideas, and you must be a good strategist in order to guide your army to victory. From overall planning, to specific piece placement, to general maneuvering - all of these and many other strategic components should be present in every game you play.

Among the few critical components of an overall *Strategy* are the following:

- Accurately evaluating position.
- Developing short and long term plans.
- Recognizing your opponent’s plans and adjusting your plans accordingly.
- Identifying appropriate move-candidates.

Here is an example from the game that decided the winner of the 2001 National Chess Congress and qualifier to the 2002 US Championship.



Sarkar, J - Khmelnsky, I
 National Congress, Philadelphia, 2001
 After 24. ♖d3

Around this time, my opponent, an experienced International Master offered me a Draw. This would have been a partially successful result since I would qualify for the US Championship, but fall out of contention for the 1st place. What would you do and why?

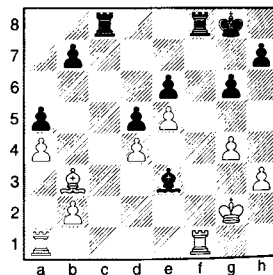
I began my evaluation by carefully examining pluses and minuses of my position. His (White) advantages are the ♖s pair and an advantage *in space*. My (Black) advantages might be less obvious – more flexible ♙ structure, weakness of the ♙ on e5 and ineffective White ♖s. The bottom line - my position was no worse and I had good reason to continue.

The short-term goal was to begin improving my pieces while keeping White ♖s unproductive. The long-term plan was to activate my ♖; find way to either pressure the ♙ on e5, or, in case of trading on d4, pressure the ♙ on d4; also trading ♖s, as White ♖ is an important defender.

Some White's ideas that concerned me were:

- Advancing ♙c3–c4 to damage my ♙s and to improve the ♖ on b3;
- Advancing ♙g2–g4 to drive away my strong ♖;
- Attacking my ♖-side ♙s after something like ♖b5.

Next, I identified the following moves as good candidates – ♖c7, ♖g5, ♖h4, ♙h5 and ♖c8. The game continued **24...♖c8 25.♙g4 ♖g5 26.♙h1 ♖xh4 27.♙xh4 ♖h6 28.♙g2 ♖e3 29.♖xe3 ♖xe3** (Diagram)



Take a look at the situation after only 5 moves. A good strategy led me to a position where Black was clearly dominating.

While White's pluses are all gone, Black still has better ♙s, better placed pieces and easy targets to attack. Since the position changed so vividly, this would be a good point to do the analysis again and to formulate a new strategy. I won this game and tied for 1st place.

Remember that, while tactical shots can bring many points and some fun moments, only good strategic play makes you a consistent winner.

Recommendations:

To be able to develop a successful *Strategy* you must:

1. Learn how to evaluate position properly.
2. Understand key strategic ideas specific to each stage of the game (Opening vs. Middlegame vs. Endgame).
3. Know the basics of developing a proper plan.
4. Learn to recognize your opponent's plans and deal with them.
5. Recognize when a position requires re-evaluation.
6. Expand the basic knowledge from #2 above, focusing on the specific *Openings* you play, typical *Middlegame* positions you often get into as well as a variety of common *Endgames*.
7. Improve your patience, resilience, and determination.
8. Practice various training positions against a computer.

Novice players should focus on #1 and #2. There are many good introductory books that will provide essential information. Among them is one of my favorites – Yasser Seirwan's *Winning Chess Strategies*

Class C and **Class B** players should focus on #1-3 and also try to incorporate some elements of #4 in their play. *Logical Chess Move by Move* by Irvin Chernev and *Reassess your Chess* by Jeremy Silman are good readings.

Class A, and **Experts** should work on #1-7. *Strategy for Tournament Player* by Lev Alburt and Sam Palatnik is an appropriate read. In addition, learning typical *Middlegame* and, even, *Endgame* strategies should be a required part of *Opening* preparation. Alex Baburin's *Winning Pawn Structures* offers a wealth of information on positions with isolated central pawn.

Masters and **higher** must raise their strategic skills to a very high level, as even a minor strategic inaccuracy could lead to a devastating loss. In addition to Baburin's book (see above), I recommend Mark Dvoretsky's *Positional Play* and Mikhail Shereshevsky's *Endgame Strategy*.

Software packages should help you learn opening strategies in the lines you play. Special training software such as *Strategy 1* and *Strategy 2* from Convekta, Ltd. are good for broad practicing.

Calculations: Anticipate Opponent's Moves!

"First identify all possible move-candidates, and you will avoid serious danger"

– Alexander Kotov, grandmaster

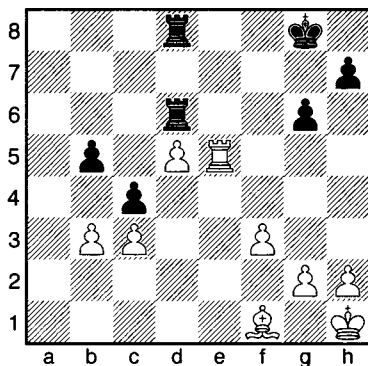
A sequence of moves is called a *variation*. Trying to anticipate your opponent's moves as well as to determine how you would deal with them prior to making your move is called a *Calculation*. The better you prepared for your opponent's reply, the more likely your move is a good one.

When should you calculate and when should you use your judgment? The rules are rather simple and depend on whether the position is *Static* or *Dynamic*:

- When the position is *Static* - no tactical or strategic threats for either side, the *Calculation* is not necessary, and a strategic planning approach should be used in selecting moves.
- When the position is *Dynamic* - with some tactical or positional threats, the specific moves that either create threats or neutralize them are easier to identify and place into a sequence or a variation.

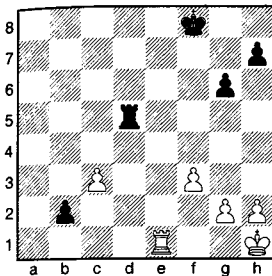
The variation you calculate can be rather simple - almost a straight line with no alternatives, or it can be very complex and look like a tree, where practically on every move there might be various replies to consider.

Take a look at the following example.



McCarthy, B – Khmel'nitsky, I
 Liberty Bell Open, Philadelphia 1994
 After 32. ♖b3

Down *exchange* and in danger of losing one of the ♖s, my opponent, a strong Fide Master, just played 32. ♖b3. Since I was under time pressure, White wanted to create a *dynamic* situation and force me to “burn” time calculating complex variations. I accepted the challenge and found this neat variation - 32... ♗×b3 33. ♘×b5 ♖b2 34. ♖e1 ♗×d5! (34... ♗a8 was also winning) 35. ♘c4 ♘f8 36. ♘×d5 ♗×d5 (Diagram)



I (Black) had to calculate the variation precisely since in the process, I gave back the *exchange*. What made my job a little easier was the absence of any alternatives for White. He was practically forced to get into this position, where there is no way for White to stop ♗a5–♗a1. Because of the mating threats on the *weak back rank*, after 37. ♖b1 ♗a5 White resigned.

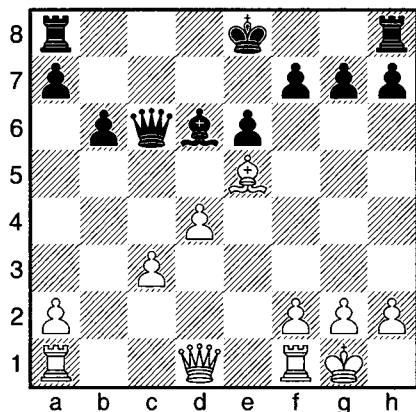
There is a greater need for an accurate calculation when it involves *Sacrifice* because the expectation is that all sacrificed material will be regained and, thus, all defensive responses must be accounted for. I refer you to the game **Khmelnitsky - Joksimovich** in the chapter on *Sacrifices* (p.298). In *Middlegame*, where a range of attacking and defensive options has to be considered, variations are often very complex and resemble a “tree.” There is some room for intuition as occasionally new resources may be uncovered as the variation is played out.

To play successfully, you must be able to accurately calculate variations when the position is *vibrant* and threats are present. However, try not to overdo this because calculating too much can lead to time pressure and energy loss. Either of them could ruin a perfect game!

Not all *dynamic* positions require calculation; in some, just a quick glance is enough. Consider the following example from the game against Michael Braude

(Diagram on the next page)

This is a rather unbalanced position – White has the initiative due to advantage in development, while Black has a better ♖ structure.



Khmelnitsky, I - Braude, M

US Team East Parsippany 1993

After 16... ♖xc6

I was desperately searching for an explosive move to prevent castling, which, if allowed, would neutralize my temporary advantage.

I saw nothing after 17. ♔xd6 ♖xd6 18. ♖a4+ ♖d7. In addition, 17. ♔xg7 looked too risky, and it was enough just to glance at 17... ♗g8, “x-raying” the ♔g2 through the ♔g7. But then “Eureka!” I found the solution - 17. ♔d5!! Once I saw this move, I spent virtually no time calculating possible variations. Black couldn’t take the ♔ with the ♖, since after ♖xd5, he would lose the ♔. Taking the ♔d5 with the ♔ looked “ugly”, since after ♔xg7 and ♗e1+ Black would have his ♔s ruined, his ♔ stuck in the center without any compensation. Finally, if the ♖ retreated, I would have an option of continuing the “fight” via ♔xg7, or settle for a “quite” ♗ endgame with an extra ♔. The game continued 17... ♖c5, and I chose the latter after 18. ♔xd6 ♖xd6 19. ♔xe6 ♖xd1 (19... ♖xe6?? 20 ♗e1) 20. ♔xf7+ ♔xf7 21. ♗fxd1. White went on to win the ♗ endgame.

In *Endgames*, especially ♔ endgames, the variations are often simpler as they resemble a straight line or “trunk of a tree”. However, you should be prepared to calculate much longer lines and, unlike in *Middlegame*, there is no second chance if you make a mistake. See **LionHeart - Mazsola** and **Delaune – Khmelnitsky** in the chapter on *Endgames* (p.276-277).

Solid knowledge of *Standard Endgame positions* makes the move selection process easier by allowing you to end your calculations as soon as you reach one of the positions where you already know the plans as well as the expected outcome.

Manage your time and energy! As you gain experience, you will learn to recognize when you need to *calculate* and when you should just follow your instincts.

Recommendations:

To improve your *Calculation* skills you should:

1. Learn to visualize the board.
2. While practicing basic *Tactics*, go beyond the first move. Identify all reasonable defensive moves and how you will deal with them.
3. Learn to calculate short variations. Initially, write notes on paper if it helps to keep your thoughts organized.
4. Solve problems using a chessboard but without moving pieces.
5. Play blindfold very short games and training positions (up to 10 moves)
6. Learn to recognize situations when you do need to calculate and when you don't need to calculate.
7. Practice more complex **combinations** and try not to miss any defensive resources, or else consider your answer not fully incorrect.
8. Work **studies** and *dynamic endgames* into your training routine.

Since *Calculation* is an integral part of practically every aspect of the game, you should check the books recommended in other reports.

Mainly, focus on books already recommended in the *Tactics*, *Sacrifice* and *Recognizing the Threat*. Also, CT-ART as well as Studies training software from Convekta, Ltd. are important tools to use.

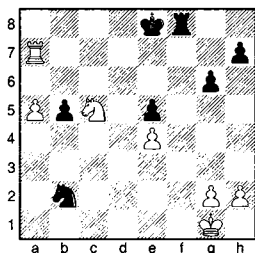
Standard Positions (Endgames)

“Weakness in the Endgame is due to lack of knowledge of theory and weak technique”
– Mark Dvoretsky, coach

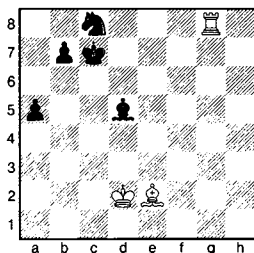
Every *Endgame* is classified into one of several major categories based on the material involved. For example a ♖ endgame, or a ♔ vs. ♘ endgame, or a ♙ endgame, just to name a few. Each of the major *Endgame* types has a number of *Standard Positions* that a chess player must be familiar with to play them successfully. Typically, these basic positions involve a very limited number of pieces and ♙s. They can therefore be easily classified into sub-categories based on the specific pieces – i.e. ♖ & ♙ vs. ♗ (a subset of ♙ *Endgame*) or ♖ vs. ♖ & two ♙s (♖ endgames) or ♙ on 7th vs. ♚ (♙s vs. ♚) etc...

Learning a great number of *Standard Positions* is essential if you want to be successful in the *Endgame*. The more you learn, the easier it becomes to navigate your “ship” in the “ocean” of infinite number of possible endgame setups. Generally, when you have a complicated *Endgame* with multiple pieces and ♙s, dealing with various ideas, assessing move-candidates and calculating variations is “no picnic”. I bet you would be very happy, if you were able to recognize specifics of the situation and found that it might actually fit (or be transposed into) one of the *Standard Positions* you are familiar with.

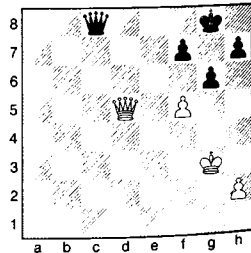
Take a look at the following endgames and try to figure out: Who is better? What is the best move and variation? What is the expected result?



#1 Khmelnitsky, I – Poers, J
Capablanca CC, NJ 1993
White to Move!



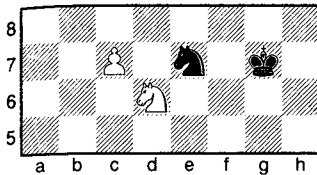
#2 Khmelnitsky, I – Yakushin, S
Kiev, Ukraine 1983
White to Move!



#3 Cunningham, R – Khmelnitsky, I
Fall Open, Lansdale 1994
Black to Move!

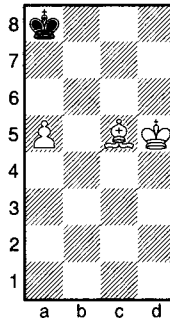
Take a few minutes to answer the above questions and then take a look at the following diagrams with a lot fewer pieces on the board. Hopefully at least some, if not all of them, are familiar to you.

#1A



White to Move!

#2A



White to Move!

#3A



White to Move!

In the diagram #1A White wins instantly by utilizing a standard *Tactical* setup after 1.♘f5+ removing the ♘ from e7 where it prevents ♖c8♔.

The position in the diagram #2A is a standard drawing setup. Despite having huge material advantage, White can't win. Three critical points that must occur are all present in the diagram: White has ♖ on ♖ file (a or b); White has "wrong" ♘ (can't attack the square of ♖'s promotion); Black ♔ reached the square of promotion.

The #3A diagram is a more complex one. Without the ♖s on a-file the position is an easy Draw. Black's strategy is to try to win White ♖ without losing his ♖f. In similar positions the following rule is true – *If White ♖ is not on its initial position - Black always wins. Otherwise, Black wins only if his ♖ is also on its initial position.* So in the diagram #3 Black wins.

Now let's go back and take another look at the diagrams 1-3. Have you noticed a resemblance between them and 1A-3A? Knowing the standard ideas allowed me relatively easy to find the correct move in each of them.

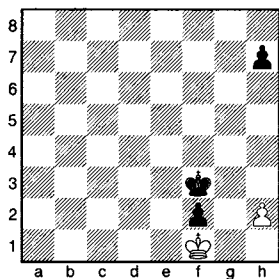
In #1, despite having an undisputable advantage and various lucrative options, I wasn't satisfied until I calculated this forced variation -

1.♖a8+ ♕e7 2.♖x♗8 ♕x♗8 3.♞a6 ♜c4 4.♞a7 ♜b6 and now, just like in #1A, the standard ♜ trick - **5.♜d7+**. White was getting the ♖ and Black resigned!

In #2, only Black has winning chances and it is likely that White is headed for a tough defense. However, by utilizing the standard idea from #2A, I successfully finished the game in only 2 moves - **1.♖xc8+! ♕xc8 2.♞a6** and, after **2...♞xa6** (otherwise 3.♞xb7) **3.♕c3**, White ♕ proceeds to a1. Black can't stop him and has to settle for a Draw.

Finally in #3, I instantly played **1...♖xf5**. After **2.♖xf5 ♞xf5 3.♕f4 ♜f6 4.♕xf5 ♕f7** Black went on to win easily. Here is the variation **45.♕f4 ♕e6 46.♕e4 ♞f5+ 47.♕f4 ♕f6 48.♕f3 ♕e5 49.♕e3 ♜f4+ 50.♕f3 ♕f5 51.♕f2 ♕e4 52.♕e2 ♞f3+ 53.♕f2 ♕f4 54.♕f1 ♕e3** If White's ♞ was on h3 or h4, Black would have picked it up easily without losing his ♜f.

55.♕e1 ♞f2+ 56.♕f1 ♕f3 (Diagram)



White is in *zugzwang*. After **57.♞h4 ♞h6!** **58.♞h5 ♕g3 59.♕e2 ♕g2** or **57.♞h3 ♞h5!** **58.♞h4 ♕g3 59.♕e2 ♕g2** Black ♞ gets through. If Black ♞ was not on h7, White could draw, since it was essential for Black to be able to choose between **57...♞h6** and **57...♞h5** in response to White's ♞ advance.

So, you can see that by knowing some finite number of *Standard Endgame setups*, you will be able to simplify your search for the correct plan as well as to find much better move-candidates, no matter whether you are trying to win or defend. You will still need to do a certain amount of calculating, however, you can significantly shorten the length of variations needed to be checked. Any time you reach a familiar position, you could stop calculating and go into the “auto-pilot” mode. The greater the number of *Endgame* positions you know the sooner you will be able to do just that.

One final point – consider the evolution of chess playing software. Despite the fact that the programs have been successfully challenging grandmasters for a while, up until recently many were terrible in the

Endgame. The main reason - an infinite number of move possibilities and a complexity of *Endgame* ideas that even a “calculator” with top-notch hardware couldn’t tackle. Then, all of a sudden, practically every program has become an *Endgame* expert. How did this happen? The answer is simple – **Tablebases** (millions of *Standard Endgame positions* with corresponding optimal variations) that are loaded separately and accessible by the playing program. Now, anytime the program reaches one of these positions, it stops all creative thinking and does a mechanical replay.

While human memory is limited and can’t compete with the one of a computer, allocating some of it to memorize a number of standard positions will ensure a successful *Endgame* experience.

Recommendations:

There is no such thing as knowing too many *Endgame* positions, thus no matter what level you are at this moment, you can always find more to learn. Learning *Standard Endgame setups* involves the following:

1. Identify *Standard* positions for each *Endgame* type.
2. Memorize ideas and, when necessary, concrete variations.
3. Learn similar, but slightly modified positions (adding pieces or ♖s).
4. Practice positions against a computer.

Everyone, from **Novice** to **Master**, should be using similar training methods and learning the same positions. The main difference is in the number of positions learned.

Typically, one should start by learning ♖ *Endgames*, primarily because almost every *Endgame* can be transformed into the ♖ *Endgame*. Standard ideas of opposition, protected passed ♖, separated ♖, square of the ♖, and many others must be learned.

Next, I’d recommend learning a few key setups with unbalanced material, such as ♖s vs. ♙ (or ♘), ♖ and ♙; ♖ vs. ♙ (or ♘), and ♖ vs. ♙.

After that, the ♖ *Endgames* are most frequent in the modern practice. Among the standard ideas are: Lucena position, frontal attack, “cutting” the 6th rank etc....

Finally, there are just couple standard ideas to learn in the pure ♔ *Endgames* and ♚ vs. ♚ or ♜ *Endgames*.

Pretty much the same set of books can be used by players of all levels - *Chess Endings, Essential Knowledge* by Yuri Averbach; Ruben Fine's classic – *Basic Chess Endings*; Carsten Muller's *Fundamental Chess Endgames*; *Endgame Manual* by Mark Dvoretsky.

My favorite training technique is as follows:

1. I would pick positions at random and see if I can
 - a. identify the plans of White and Black.
 - b. figure out the best variation.
2. I would compare my answers with the author's notes.

Higher rated players should work on solving *studies*, since, in addition to offering excellent *Calculation* training. A majority of the studies available are built upon the various *Standard Endgame* ideas.

My favorite Endgame training software packages *Studies* and *Chess Endgame Training* come from Convekta Ltd.

Sacrifice: Check is the Only Threat You can't Ignore!

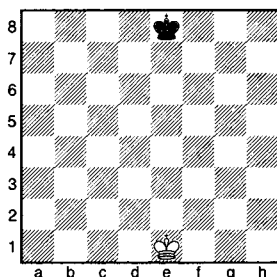
“A good Sacrifice is one that is not necessary sound, but leaves your opponent dazed and confused”

- Rudolph Spielman, grandmaster

One of the very first lessons we learned in chess was about the relative value of chess pieces. The ♔ is equal to 3 ♖s, the ♕ is equal to the ♔, the ♗ and 2 ♖s are equal to two minor pieces, the ♚ and a ♖ are equal to two ♗s, etc... By establishing the ♖ as a unit of measure, all chess pieces become “trading commodities” of a known price. We all consider the same scale of relative values of chess material and try to gain some advantage in value or at least to keep the balance. *Sacrifice* makes us reconsider this scale. Gaining material is one of the more important *static* advantages, yet the *dynamics* of the position can force us to focus on other aspects, often at the expense of chess material.

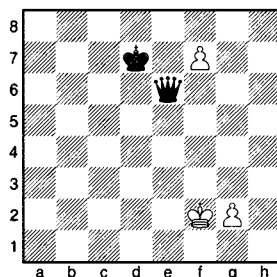
Consider the following extreme examples:

#1



White to Move!

#2



White to Move!

Diagram #1: a ♔ (or ♕) is a lot more valuable than a ♖; in fact it is even more valuable than three ♖s. But would you rather have a ♔ (or ♕) or a ♖ on the board? Of course a ♖, because the specifics of the position are such that the ♔ (or ♕) will not improve White's chances, but the ♖ will.

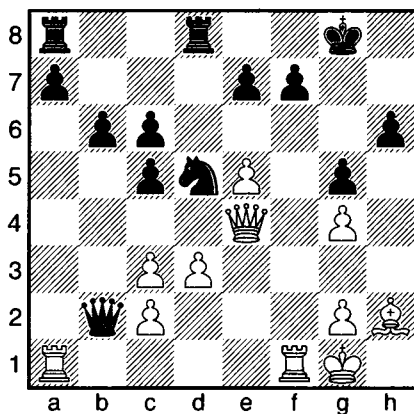
Diagram #2: *Under-promotion* – a situation when a ♖ is promoted into something other than the ♚, either in order to avoid the *stalemate* or to use the unique features of the ♔. After the “normal” 1. ♖f8 ♚ White may have to play another 100+ moves trying to advance his ♖ and avoid *perpetual check*. However, a forcing 1. ♖f8 ♔+ and 2. ♔×e6 transforms

the situation into an easily winning *Standard* ♖ + ♜ vs. ♜ *Endgame* after 2...♙×e6 3.♙g3 ♙f5 4.♙h4 etc...

Sacrifice is an action that disturbs the material balance. Typically, sacrifices are either *real* or *fake*. When material is sacrificed for some intangible compensation, such as advantage in development or initiative, this is a *real* sacrifice. A lot more common is a *fake* sacrifice, when material is given up temporarily, and is fully expected to be collected back and, often, with a nice “profit”. It is not uncommon to sacrifice even the strongest piece if you can calculate all the lines and clearly see your expected return. However, it is a rarity to see something other than ♖(s), minor piece, or *exchange* (the ♖ for a minor piece) to be sacrificed for purely positional compensation.

Sacrifice is an integral part of your typical *Attack*, but is also often used in *Defense* to shift the focus of the aggression, neutralize attackers or start a *Counterattack*.

Lets consider a couple of examples from my games -

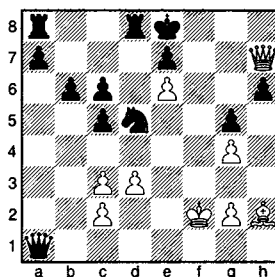


Khmelnitsky, I - Joksimovic, D
Novi Bechi Open, Yugoslavia, 1990
After 24...♙g8

Poor Black ♜ is in big trouble; just check the meager ♜ protection, aggressive White pieces and the fact that Black ♞ is “out of office.”

I was able to finish this game by sacrificing the pair of ♞s. After 25.♞×f7

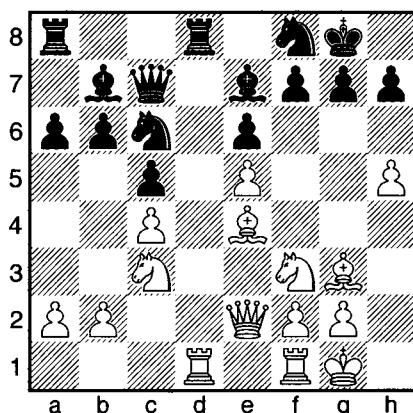
♙×a1+ 26.♘f2! (not as good is 26.♞f1 due to 26...♙×f1+ 27.♘×f1 ♘g7 and the game is far from over) ♘×f7 (else 27.♙h7+ ♘e8 (or 27...♘e6 28.♙f5#, or 27...♘f8 28.♞e6) 28.♞e6 (Diagram)



And Black resigned since the *checkmate* after either ♙f7 or ♙g8 or ♙h8 is inevitable.

This was an example of a *fake* sacrifice. White gave up a lot of material, but the calculated variation lead to the unstoppable *checkmate*.

Real sacrifice occurred in the following position, from the game that decided the winner of the Ruse Open.



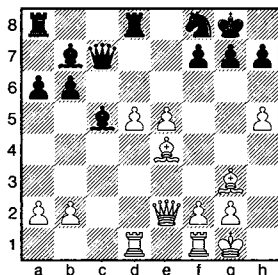
Khmelnitsky, I - Dgebuadze, A
Ruse Open, Bulgaria 1989
After 17...♞f8

White is enjoying advantage in space and initiative, yet Black's position is solid and the open d-file would allow simplifying trades. I unloaded a **fake** sacrifice that became a **real** one: 18.♞d5! ♞×d5 (what else?) 19.♞×d5 ♞d4 20.♞×d4 ♞×d4 and here, instead of recovering the sacrificed piece via 20.♞d6, I went for 21.♞×d4 ♞c5 22.♞dd1

(Diagram on the next page)

Probably a "cold-headed" computer would have found a way to defend

Black's position. But, I wouldn't have played this sacrifice in the critical game, if my opponent were a "silicon monster." My fellow human didn't put the



best resistance and lost rather quickly. The game continued 22...♔d7 23.♖f3 ♜h6 24.♞fe1 ♜a4 25.♙h4 ♞d7 26.♖g4 ♜h8 27.♙f6 ♜xf6 28.♜xf6 ♞g6? (More resilient was 28...♞e6 29.♜xe6 ♜xe6 and now White could either continue attack or regain the piece back after 30.♞xd7 ♖xd7 31.♖g7+ ♖xg7 32.♜xg7+ and 33.♙xb7) 29.♜xg6 ♜xg6 30.♖xg6 and Black resigned,

giving me a clear first place in the tournament.

Recommendations:

To be able to utilize both **real** and **fake** sacrifices, you should:

1. Understand relative values of the pieces and underlying reasons for the value scale.
2. Improve your *Tactical* skills, so you can clearly see the possibilities of **fake** (temporary) sacrifices.
3. Learn the types of sacrifices common to each stage of the game.
4. Improve your *Calculation* skills, so you can look further into the lines and be more comfortable in sacrificing more valuable pieces.
5. Work on your strategic skills and learn to recognize attacking and defending situations when sacrifices are very helpful.
6. Practice various training positions against a computer.

Novice players should focus on learning the value scale and trying to experiment with playing unbalanced positions. This is the best way to understand why, typically, a ♞ is better than a ♙, or a ♞ is better than a ♜. Also, basic books on *Tactics* will help in understanding the basis for **fake** sacrifices. See recommendations in *Tactics* report.

Class C and **Class B** players should work mainly on improving their tactical skills. Additionally, I would recommend becoming familiar with the types of sacrifices common for each stage of the game. For example, during Opening you can frequently see **real** positional sacrifices of one or two ♜s or even a minor piece in order to keep the opponent's ♔ in the center. In the *Endgame*, there are different common sacrifice ideas, such as to clear the path of the ♜ (promotion) or *stalemate* based defense when the last piece that can move becomes "desperado" (opponent is forced to take it), etc... Do not hesitate to give up material if a reasonable explanation is

given. Check *1001 winning sacrifices* by Fred Reinfeld, and also other books recommended in my reports on *Tactics*, *Attack* and *Defense*.

Class A and **Experts** should work more extensively on improving *Calculation* skills and utilization of **real** sacrifices. In addition to books mentioned in other reports, I would suggest these specific books that should help with a broad understanding of the subject - *Theory of Sacrifice* by Rudolf Spielman and *Positional Sacrifice* by Neil Macdonald

Masters and **higher** should utilize **real** and **fake** sacrifices on a regular basis. In addition to the above-mentioned materials, I would recommend Angus Dunnington's *Understanding the Sacrifice*. Also, using *studies* in regular training will help to improve your understanding of relative values in *Endgames*.

Also, **Class A** and **higher** would benefit from studying games of A.Alekhine, M.Tal and A.Shirov – all masters of **real** sacrifices, and T.Petrosian – a defensive genius with “trademarked” *exchange* sacrifice for purely positional compensation.

Utilization of training software is always a plus. While there is no specific program geared towards teaching you how to sacrifice, the *Chess Tactics for Intermediate Players* and *CT-ART* from Convekta, Ltd. should be very helpful. .

Recognizing Threats: Be on the Alert!

“The blunders are all there on the board, waiting to be made”

– Savely Tartakower, grandmaster

Chess is a war and, in the end, one of the ♔s is expected to resign or die (via *checkmate*). You and your opponent are trying to accomplish the same thing – to win enough material to force the resignation or organize a direct attack against the ♔. In the process both you and your opponent generate a number of *Threats* against each other’s overall position and individual pieces, including the ♔.

To be successful, you must be able to recognize the *Threats* your opponent is preparing, as well as to learn various methods of dealing with them. After every move your opponent makes, you have to check thoroughly if he has created any *Threats* before proceeding with your move selection. There is only one exception to the rule – if your next move is a direct assault on his ♔ - the check or *checkmate*.

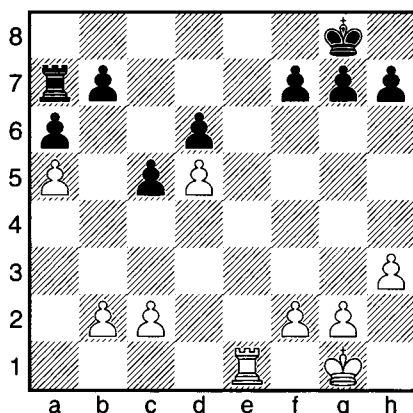
Anything else, even an attack on the ♔, may be ignored by your opponent. *Threats* can vary in many ways. They can be *Tactical* and *Strategic*. Each stage of the game may have a set of unique *Threats* that a player should be on the lookout for. Furthermore, *Threats* can be situational, for example while attacking vs. defending.

A *Tactical Threat* usually involves gaining material by taking the opponent’s piece or ♖, by promoting your ♖, or checking or mating the ♔. A *Strategic threat* is often harder to spot, but can be no less dangerous than the *Tactical*. Typical *Strategic Threats* would be – ruining the ♖ structure, forcing the loss of castling, gaining open file, etc...

Occasionally, you need to deal with both *Tactical* and *Strategic Threats* simultaneously. Consider the following example.

(Diagram on the next page)

White has a direct *Threat* to *checkmate* via 39.♖e8#. Black has various options on how to deal with this *Threat* – for example 38...♖a8, or 38...♘f8, or 38...♗f6 (♗g6 or ♗h6).



Khmelnitsky, I - Popov, A

Ukraine, 1982

After 38. ♖×e1

However, White also has a *Strategic Threat* of getting his ♖ into Black's position via 3.♖e7. Once there, the ♖ can start harassing Black ♗s. So, from the Black's choices listed above, the best move is 38...♘f8 taking control over the squares e7 and e8 and stopping both *Threats*.

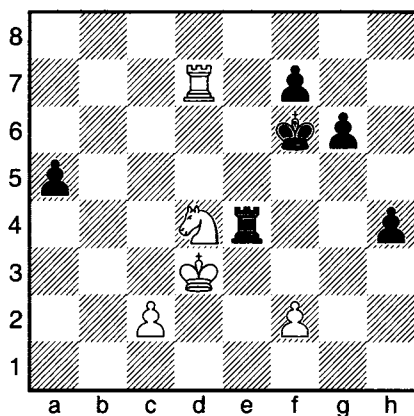
As the game progresses the types of *Threats* you should be on the lookout for changes as well. In the *Opening*, you should be more concerned with *double attacks*, *pins* etc... (*tactical*) and the ♔'s safety. Also be wary of the integrity of the ♗ structure, piece placement etc... (*strategic*). In the *Middlegame*, there are many more tactical motifs. Attack against the ♔ is very common (*tactical*), as well as pressure in the center and control of open files, etc... (*strategic*). The threats of promoting a ♖, getting stalemated, or penetrating with the ♖ on the 7th are far more common during the *Endgame*.

The severity of a particular *Threat* is also changing – losing a ♖ or two earlier in the game is not as devastating as when this happens in the

Endgame. Conversely, losing castling rights or having ♔ not properly protected is by far less concerning during the *Endgame*.

Depending on the severity of the *Threat*, you have various defensive options. The most important one, which is often overlooked by both the attacker and the defender, is to **ignore it**. Remember, except when your ♔ is in check, you always have this alternative! When your opponent is threatening mate in 1, you can “ignore it” by making a check. When your ♖ is a target, you have even greater number of ways to “ignore it”, such as a sacrifice or attack on opponent’s ♖ or ♔.

Here is a story of a very brave ♜:



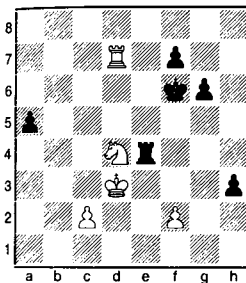
Getz, S - Khmeltnitsky, I
 World Open, Philadelphia 1992
 After 49.♔d3

White has material advantage and only needs to consolidate his position before running forward with the ♖c. Black’s hope lies with the ♖h4 and current poor coordination of White pieces. Objectively speaking, White should be winning!

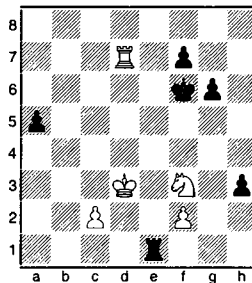
Black ♜ must be active and create some disturbance in order to hinder White pieces from coordinating their efforts. It is placed well, but also being attacked. What do you think Black should do about it?

Nothing, just ignore! The game continued - **49...♖h3!** instead of protecting the ♖, Black created his own threat of promoting ♖h. White had to address it. **50. ♜f3 ♜e1!** (Black ♜ finds another good spot where White can't touch it - 51. ♜xe1?? ♖h2) **51. ♜a7 ♖g5 52. ♜x a5** (similar to the game would have been 52. ♜a6+ ♜g7 53. ♜x a5 ♖f6) **52...♜g1!** The third different square where the invincible Black ♜ completely ignores White ♜. It remains on g1 completely unprotected until the game ends. After **53. ♜a6+ ♜g7 54. ♜e4 ♖g4 55. ♜a5 ♜h6 56. ♜a6+ ♜g7 57. ♜a5 ♜h6 58. ♜a6+ ♜g7** a Draw was agreed. Neither side could make progress!

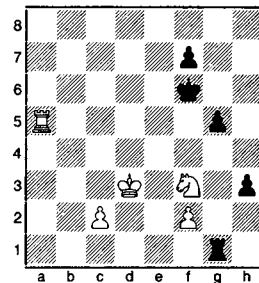
Take another look at the diagrams were Black ♜ defies all of the threats -



After **49...♖h3**



After **50...♜e1!**



After **52...♜g1!**

No matter what type of *threat* you are dealing with, what stage of the game you are in, or any other issue you are faced with – remember that you should almost always have alternatives on how to respond.

Recommendations:

To be successful at recognizing *threats*, you should

1. Continuously train the discipline of thinking – always start your decision making process by asking yourself – “Why did he make his last move? Is there a threat to my ♔ or any other piece?”
2. Improve your *Tactical* skills.
3. Learn types of *Threats* common to each stage of the game.
4. Study on your *Openings* and identify standard *Tactical* and *Strategic threats*.

5. Improve your *Calculation* skills, so you can look further into the lines and be more comfortable at identifying whether a treat is real.
6. Work on your strategic skills so you can better recognize various strategic threats.
7. Practice various training positions against a computer.

Working on each of the above and expanding your overall knowledge and experience will enable you to deal successfully with various threats. Among the recommended readings are *Blunders and How to Avoid Them* by Angus Dunnington and *Looking for Trouble* by Dan Heisman.

Here is the training method I developed to improve the *Threat Recognition*. After solving a *Tactical (Strategic)* exercise, consider this: What could have been the last move, which allowed the tactical (strategic) idea? Why would the player miss the coming threat? What should he have done instead, to prevent or, possibly, set up a hidden defense (trap)? Doing this regularly during your training will help you to increase your level of awareness of the common threats and to expand your arsenal of options to address them.

Analyzing Your Own Games

„Record positions in which you faced problems and made errors”

– Lev Alburt, grandmaster

While everyone prefers to learn from the mistakes of others, this is not very realistic when it comes to chess. You must analyze your own games in greater detail to identify the types of mistakes you made and to find out in which situations you need to improve your decision making process.

The four critical goals that you are trying to accomplish are:

- Checking your *Opening* preparation.
- Discovering the turning points and assessing your decision making at those points.
- Finding and classifying your own mistakes (i.e. tactical vs. strategic, while attacking or defending, etc.)
- Uncovering new ideas and better moves and analyzing what could have happened if they were played.

Achieving the above goals is not an easy task. However, even a **novice** can discover a number of personal mistakes as well as find some better alternatives. It is understood that in the beginning, only major mistakes will be uncovered, not to worry! If one follows the right process and analyses one's games regularly, the quality of annotations will increase.

Here is the step-by-step process I developed for myself as well as for my students to follow:

1. Begin recording every tournament game played as soon as the chess notation is learned.
2. Spend 10-15 minutes after each tournament game writing extremely brief notes. The goal here is not to analyze, but rather to preserve the thought process.
3. Store your games in a database once you have access to computer. I am using ChessBase which is primarily a game-management software, but even pure chess-playing programs

like *Fritz*, *Chessmaster* and others, have some data-storing features.

4. While entering the game, type your initial notes (from 2), taking a closer look at each move and doing more serious analysis. Do not use computer analysis just yet.
5. Highlight some of the critical moves that you now think were strategically wrong. Record your thoughts of ideas and moves that would've been better.
6. Use computer analysis: **blunder-check** feature to identify tactical mistakes (both: was allowed and wasn't executed) and **playing** feature to practice your strategic findings (from 5).
7. Review the *Opening* you played. Find a good stopping point (between 10th and 20th moves) to summarize its outcome. The conclusion should be very clear, something like: "Good, will play the same way next time" or "Need to improve beginning on 12th move."

As you can see from the above steps, I suggest using computers mainly for their data-management features. Use the *Fritz* program and others for their best features –

- finding tactical blunders, and
- being a sparring partner "on-call" 24x7.

It is my firm belief that computers will not teach you proper *Strategy*.

Only **Experts** and **higher** should be using computer analysis regularly in their Opening preparations.

Every game played is a potential lesson to be learned no matter if it was won or lost. Do not take this opportunity lightly or skip it altogether!

Khmelnitsky's Top-10 Training Tips

1. Find a very strong player whose style you like and “adopt” his *Opening* repertoire. First, you would be assured that the openings are sound. Second, you will have regular updates as “your” grandmaster plays in the top-level events.
2. Focus on **move anticipation** – i.e. before you make your move, try to identify possible responses by your opponent. Mark on your score sheet opponent’s moves that came as a total surprise.
3. Every major change in the game flow requires a re-evaluation of the position and, possibly, a modification of your plan.
4. Focus on analyzing your games. Use chess software (like Fritz) only to determine tactical opportunities and, to some extent, to check the opening play. Positional aspects of the game should be studied with a coach or a stronger player. If none is available, study on your own using the computer as a sparring-partner.
5. Practice critical *Middlegame* and *Endgame* positions from your game (or any game you are studying) against chess playing software (like Fritz).
6. When you come across a position that you misjudged (either from your game or the game you were studying) store it in a “diagram” folder or a database for future studying. In essence, you will be building your own training book. As you get more and more positions, start classifying them into the subcategories, i.e. ♖-*Endgame*, or *Attack* on the ♔-side, etc...
7. Don’t worry about your rating; focus on the tournament results instead. Play in your rating section in the big “money” events. Play up a section or two in the smaller “club” events.
8. Every game is a lesson - never skip one. Don’t agree to a draw in a position where you are not worse. Exceptions – when you

physically can't continue playing (i.e. sick, have to leave, etc...), or when Draw assures a successful tournament result (money, title, qualification etc...)

9. Do not play Blitz frequently (5 minutes or less per game).
10. Balance playing and studying time. Use the **"80/20"** rule – beginners should spend 80% of their total "chess" time playing and 20% studying. As you progress through the rankings, studying becomes more and more important. Those at the highest levels should plan to study approximately 80% of the time and play only 20%.

Afterword: What is the Next Step?

Congratulations! You have completed the test, calculated your rating and a corresponding title, identified your weaknesses and strengths and even learned some training ideas. What is the next step on the road to improvement?

Well, the first thing, as described earlier in the book, is to remember that the testing environment is significantly different from the one you get during a tournament. Knowing this should keep you from being both overly excited and overly concerned, thus no “S.O.S.”, nor “I am the best on my street!” please! Just focus on your goals and how to achieve them!

The successful training plan should consist of various components.

- Thorough evaluation via testing and reviewing of games (at least few times a year).
- Regular tournament participation (at least monthly).
- Simultaneous studying of books on tactics and endgames (regularly).
- Going over well annotated modern and classical games (regularly).
- Expanding or refreshing *Opening* preparation (periodically).
- Training with a computer – practicing training positions, opening positions, annotating own games, and doing opening preparation.

Mixing them up is a good idea. Since there are so many opportunities and so little time, good planning of your training is extremely important.

From the test you saw what your “weakest links” are and you also found my recommendations and studying ideas. Please remember that the 12 areas tested overlap each other, so, by working on one area, you will be improving others as well. After all, every position is either:

- Opening, Middlegame, or Endgame.
- Attack, Defense, or Counterattack
- Strategical or Tactical.

Specifically, every *Tactical* position usually involves *Threats* and *Sacrifices*, while *Endgame* positions involve some *Standard Endgame Positions* and either *Tactics* or *Strategy*, etc...

I would expect you to see improvement in more than one area, even if you really focus only on a single issue. Therefore, while the work ahead of you is certainly complex, it shouldn't be overwhelming. Plan your studying carefully! Remember that a successful training begins with accurate evaluation and a well-designed training plan!

I hope you enjoyed the test and I value your feedback. Please visit my website <http://www.ChessExam.com> and submit your comments and results.

Best of luck!

Igor Khmelnitsky

Appendix 1

Recommended Chess Training Tools: Software, Books and Periodicals

Below is the list of training materials recommended throughout this book. Frequently, I get a chance to review newly released products. Check my website periodically for updates: <http://www.ChessExam.com>

Chess Software:

Many programs have been revised and updated since I saw them. In parentheses, you can find the latest version I am using. Check my website for additional updated info.

ChessBase family (by ChessBase - www.chessbase.com)

ChessBase (8) - Database managing program for experienced players;

Fritz (8) - playing software – for experienced players;

Fritz & Chester – teaching & playing software for children (novice level)

Available for the PC & Mac (*Fritz & Chester*) platforms.

Chessmaster (by UBI Soft. – www.ubi.com)

Chessmaster (9000) – teaching & playing software for all ages & levels.

Available for both PC & Mac platforms.

ChessAssistant family (by Convekta, Ltd. www.Convekta.com) – standalone training tools - *Advanced Chess School*, *Chess Endgame Training*, *Chess tactics for Intermediate Players*, *CT-ART (3.0)*, *Strategy*, *Studies (2.0)*, , and others. Available for the PC platform.

Chess Books:

1953 Interzonal by David Bronstein.

1001 Brilliant Ways to Checkmate by Fred Reinfeld

1001 Winning Chess Sacrifices and Combinations by Fred Reinfeld

Chess Books (cont.):

Art of Attack in Chess by Milan Vukovich.
Attack and Defense by Mark Dvoretsky
Attacking Technique by Colin Crouch
Attacking with 1.e4 by John Emms
Basic Chess Endings by Ruben Fine
Blunders and How to Avoid Them by Angus Dunnington
Chess Endings, Essential Knowledge by Yuri Averbach.
Chess Software User's Guide by Byron Jacobs
Combinational Motif by Maxim Bloch
Encyclopedia of Errors in Openings by Anatoly Matsukevitch
Endgame Challenge by John Hall
Endgame Manual by Mark Dvoretsky
Endgame Strategy by Michail Shereshevsky
Fire on the Board by Alexei Shirov
Fundamental Chess Endgames by Karsten Muller and David Lampert.
How to Defend in Chess by Colin Crouch
How to Use Computers to Improve Your Chess by Christian Kongsted
Ideas behind Chess Openings by Ruben Fine
King in Jeopardy by Lev Alburt and Sam Palatnik
Logical Chess by Irvin Chernev
Looking for Trouble by Dan Heisman
Mastering Chess Opening by Byron Jacobs
Manual of Chess Combinations 1 by Sergei Ivashenko
Manual of Chess Combinations 2 by Sergei Ivashenko
Manual of Chess Combinations 3 by Alexander Mazja
Manual of Chess Endgames by Sarhan Guliev
My System by Aaron Nimtsovitch
Opening Preparation by Mark Dvoretsky
Positional Play by Mark Dvoretsky
Reassess Your Chess by Jeremy Silman
Road to Chess Improvement by Alex Yermolinsky
Simple Chess by John Emms
Starting out ... various openings covered by various authors
Strategy for the Tournament Player by Lev Alburt and Sam Palatnik
Understanding the Sacrifice by Angus Dunnington
Understating chess Move by Move by John Nunn.
Winning Chess Openings by Yasser Seirawan
Winning Pawn Structures by Alex Baburin

Chess Periodicals: Magazines and Websites:

What should you expect from a quality chess magazine or website? In my view – accurate and timely chess news, commentaries by leading players and organizers, quality articles, annotated games, as well as tournament schedules. Here are a few of my favorite sources:

Magazines:

ChessToday – (daily via e-mail) www.ChessToday.net

Chess Informant – www.Sahovski.com

New in Chess – www.NewInChess.com

Chess Life – www.USChess.org

64 – (in Russian) www.64.ru

Websites:

ChessBase: <http://www.ChessBase.com>

ChessCafe: <http://www.ChessCafe.com>

ChessAssistant: <http://www.convekta.com>

ChessCenter: <http://www.ChessCenter.com>

Appendix 2

Players and Composers

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"This book clearly shows what parts of the game you may want to improve and then tells you how to do that. I recommend this book to all my students!" – **Jaan Ehvest**, Grandmaster, former World Championship candidate, president of *Ehvest Chess-Gates LLC*

"The training ideas and book recommendations are right on the money!" – **Alex Shabalov**, Grandmaster, 3-times US Champion

International Master **Igor Khmelnitsky** is a 3-times participant in the exclusive U.S. Chess Championship, a winner of numerous tournaments in Europe and the United States. Igor is very experienced chess coach; he works with students of all levels. Igor's work has been published in *Chess Informant*, *New In Chess*, *Chess Life*, *Chess Today* and others major chess publications. Igor is the founder of the popular website www.IamCoach.com.

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